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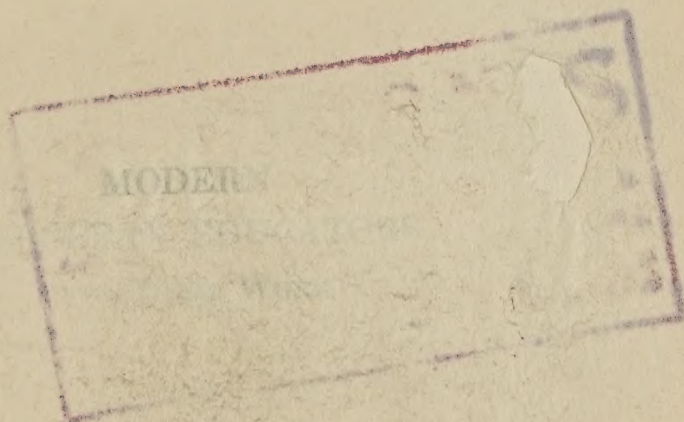
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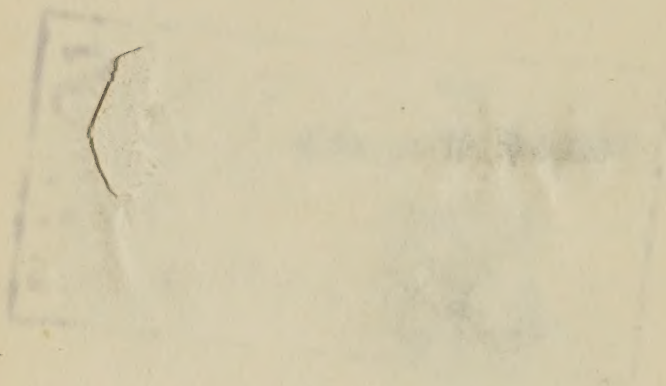
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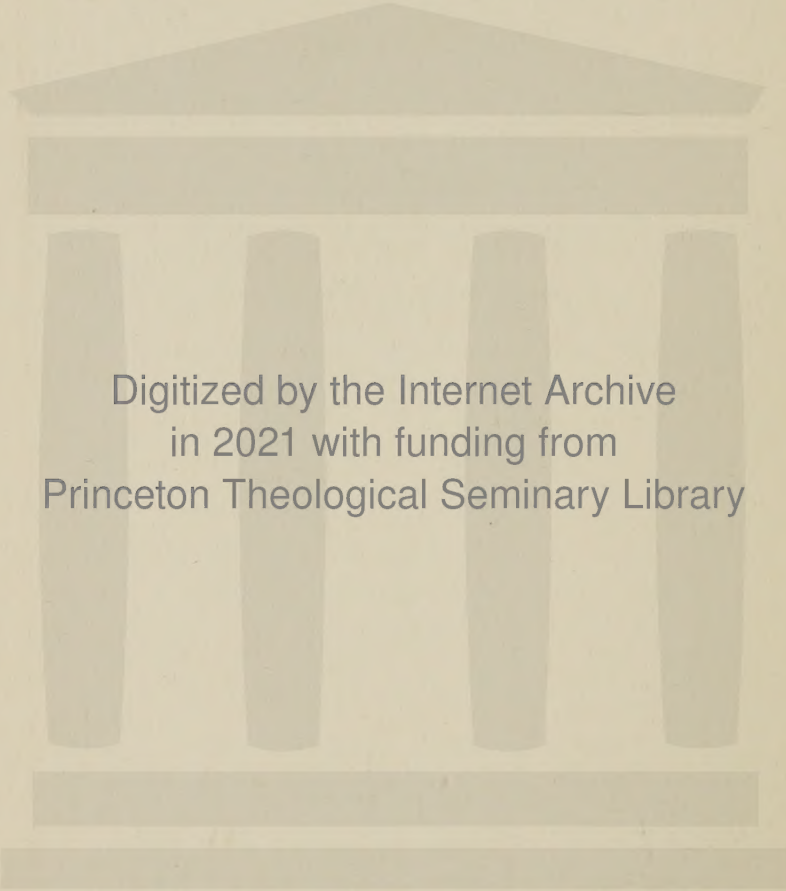
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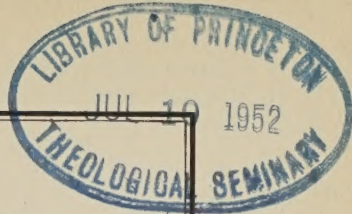




MODERN
EUROPEAN EDUCATORS
AND THEIR WORK



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MODERN
EUROPEAN EDUCATORS
AND THEIR WORK

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1934

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PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TO

DEAN JOHN W. WITHERS

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED WITH APPRECIATION.

PREFACE

IN the following pages I have tried to portray a few of the more notable aspects of progressive European education, recent and contemporary. My motive has been twofold. I have sought, first, to meet the needs of my own students in our course in contemporary educational trends at the School of Education of New York University. But I have also long felt that material of the kind presented in this book would be of use and help to the great majority of American schoolmen. For because of their linguistic limitations many American educators have been markedly isolated from the rest of the educational world, despite their need for a perspective of its work and aims.

For the most part I have made an effort to include sections on educators about whose work little or nothing has been written in English. There are, of course, a few exceptions, such as those of Montessori and the Danish Folk High Schools: I have included such rather familiar material mainly because of its significance. I

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have not attempted to be exhaustive. Many other educators and their work might properly have been reviewed—Keyserling for his efforts in adult education at Darmstadt, the late Rudolph Steiner, the *Compagnons de l'Université Nouvelle*, Stern, the late Sanderson, Piaget, Ferrière, and countless others. If these have not been included in the present volume, it is certainly not because they lack significance, but for other reasons: very often their contribution has been of special rather than of general interest; sometimes it has been somewhat too similar to other contributions already discussed; and in some instances, while highly meritorious in its native soil, it would have seemed almost bizarre to the American, because of America's own peculiarities.

The educators whose work and ideals are depicted here are of the order of progressives. Pedagogically they are the kinsmen of the great teachers of all time and all lands. In their educational philosophies and aims, and in their methods of realizing these aims, they differ widely. But on one point they almost all agree: that the school should give the child a chance to develop in his own way so far as possible. Like Wilhelm Meister, they hold that wise men will let a boy find that [viii]

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which is suited to his nature. They do not clamor to mold the child according to any preconceived pattern: they prefer to let the child grow. At the same time, however, the wise educator will try to guide the pupil, to show him the way by which, through his own action and on his own responsibility, he will be able to realize himself to his fullest. The salient exception in this general agreement is modern Russia. While the educators of the U. S. S. R. may wish to follow Wilhelm Meister in letting a boy find that which is suited to his nature, in the end this of course must always be compatible with Communist ideology: consequently indoctrination has a strong hand in the Russian schools.

To thank personally all those who have either directly or indirectly lent a helping hand in the writing of these pages is unfortunately impossible. To them, however, goes my sincerest gratitude. To all those educators who furnished me with special data and information about their work and schools I owe an unpayable debt. Here I must mention in particular J. H. Badley of Bedales, Dr. Paul Geheeb of Odenwald, Georges Bertier of the Ecole des Roches, and Jaap Kool, former head of Wickersdorf. Not only did these gentlemen

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give me invaluable material concerning their educational work, but they also read the chapters relating to their various schools. Needless to say, they are not responsible for any errors, either of judgment or of fact, which may have crept into our text. My cordial thanks go also to Dean J. H. Minnick of the University of Pennsylvania, School of Education, for having permitted me to reprint part of the material which was first printed under his editorship in the *Educational Outlook*; likewise to Dr. J. McKeen Cattell, editor of *School and Society*, and to Dr. A. L. Crabb, editor of the *Peabody Journal of Education*. Among my own colleagues I am particularly indebted to Drs. E. George Payne, Herman H. Horne and Paul R. Radosavljevich, whose scholarship, vision, and experience have been a constant and pleasant stimulus.

A. E. M.

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

EACH year witnesses an increasing number of histories of education. These, for the most part, follow conventional patterns which emphasize general trends of the more or less remote past in educational history. The influence of great leaders and the dramatic character of revolutionary educational movements initiated by them have caught the imagination of educational writers. Thus the major emphasis continues to be placed upon these leaders and movements, regardless of the fact that theories and contributions of the earlier writers are relatively less important, in the determination of present educational policies, than the contributions of recent educators.

As a matter of fact, the recent changes in our culture demand a new approach to education. Educational theories and practices of previous centuries are ineffective except as they have been modified to meet twentieth-century conditions. Therefore there is a vital need for the presentation and interpretation of leaders who are contributing

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to the solution of educational problems created by world readjustments.

Dr. Meyer makes a distinct contribution to the history of education in offering the reader an acquaintance with some of the present educational programs and their sponsors in various lands.

E. GEORGE PAYNE

CHAPTER I

JAN LIGTHART

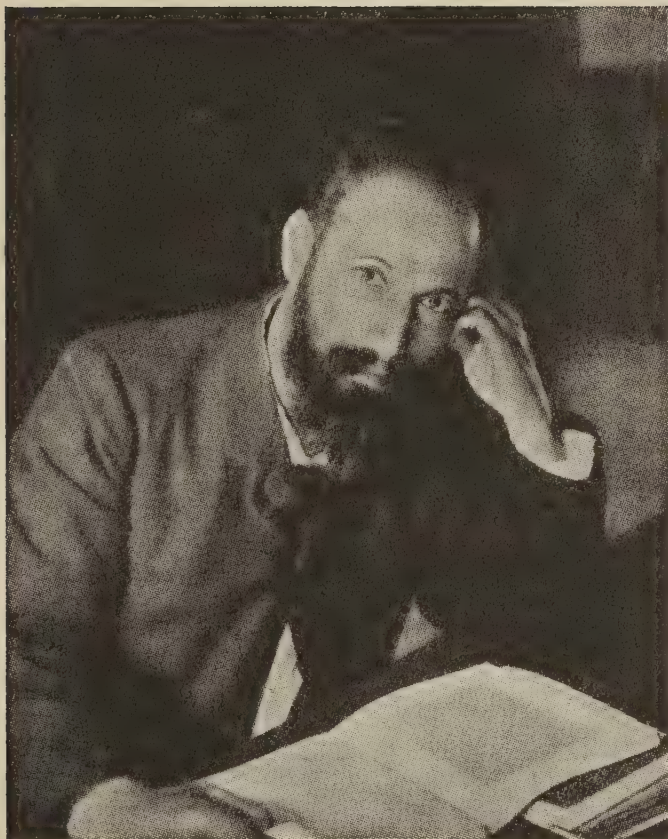
JAN LIGTHART, who has taken his place among Holland's great educators, is hardly known in English-speaking countries. Certainly his life, although full of honor, was not spectacular. Once the teacher of the present queen, and thereafter the recipient of many attractive offers of positions, he preferred to remain a schoolmaster, humble and unassuming. Throughout his lifetime, he was the kind and steadfast servant of his fellow men in one of the poorest sections of the Dutch capital.

Like his spiritual brother, Pestalozzi, this Dutch educator was powerfully influenced by his mother: from her he received his simple idealism, his humility and kindness. Yet it was mainly chance that made Ligthart a teacher. For his parents were very poor, and he had at the start only vague prospects of obtaining a higher education. Indeed, school would have ended for him with the sixth

grade had not an understanding teacher detected his talents and offered to let him serve as a pupil teacher. Nor was his progress, from that time on, ever easy. Despite his frail health, he had to work indefatigably until he passed the state examinations that would admit him to the teaching profession; and during all his life he had to cope with numerous opponents. It is remarkable, then, that at the age of thirty he had become the head of a large elementary school, which was located on the Tullingsstraat in The Hague and was destined to become famous throughout the Netherlands.

Into the faculty of this school Ligthart injected the spirit of coöperation, and as a close working unit the teachers pondered school problems. They maintained an educational paper, a sort of house organ that circulated only among themselves, and in which two problems were concentrated upon: How can we provide for greater pupil activity? And, how can we better select and organize subject matter? But Ligthart stressed activity above all. He was preëminently what the Germans call an *Arbeitspädagoge*. The child's spontaneity was to be related to his learning; beginning with his native ground, the child himself was gradually to explore the universe. Instruction was to be objective.

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JAN LIGTHART

Nevertheless, for Ligthart an object lesson did not mean necessarily the use of objects; the object lesson was not to paralyze the teacher's tongue. "How," Ligthart once wrote, "can a teacher impart the facts of the past without the use of words? When this man tells his boys about Napoleon's march to Russia, so vividly that the lads participate with all their heart, then he is giving an object lesson, as beautiful as you can imagine."¹ The object lesson was to cast its illuminating beam on the pupil's environment: it was to prepare the way for subsequent subject matter—in the last analysis, for life—and to make the young learner familiar with the connectedness of life and nature.

Hence Ligthart strove to make his youthful protégés understand their surroundings, to reveal to them the parts played by work and industry, gardening and farming. He wished them to see with comprehension the everyday world about them, and to draw thrills from common things. The words of the teacher were to be fortified not only by inspiring teaching, but also by pictures and materials, by walks and visits, and by work in

¹ From *Verspreide Opstellen* (popular edition), The Hague, 1924.

the school garden. So during the first year the pupil raised animals, and studied the plants in the fields and pasture lands. The following year instruction was given in agriculture, including the raising of grain and potatoes, and in food problems. In the third year vegetables were studied; the following year textiles and foodstuffs were of especial interest; and during the fifth year the child added the starches to his studies. During all these studies the school garden was the scene of much activity. What the child studied in the school-room was, wherever possible, a cue for his work in the garden. Did he learn about potatoes in the classroom? Then let him plant them in the garden. Did he learn theories of beauty? Then let him observe their application in landscaping. The children worked as potters, carpenters, and glassblowers. Everything worthy that man did and thought became, as far as the child's ability permitted, a fitting subject for the school. Thus Ligthart's Tullingsstraat school included a wide variety of activities: it was a doing school in a very real sense.

Ligthart looked upon school and life as one and inseparable. Interestingly enough, he called the educational magazine which he began to edit in

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1899, *School en Leven*—"School and Life." The school, he felt, is at best an instrument of life: to make life richer is the school's prime reason for being, and to accomplish this it must be in harmony with life's needs and activities. The world is to be brought into the schoolroom. "*De wereld in! om te zien niet alleen hoe rijk maar ook hoe schoon de wereld is.*" "Into the world! in order to see not alone how rich but also how lovely it is." Instead of the traditional course of studies—which certainly did not bring the world into the school—Ligthart sought to develop a curriculum which, as we have seen, was related to the child's environment. Nature, work, and man were the bases of his method. Each of the six elementary grades was to concentrate on a center of learning, these centers being: (1) The school neighborhood and the life of peasant children. (2) Food and shelter; sources of supply and processes of preparation. (3) Building materials and elementary geology; maps and diagrams of the school garden, of Holland, and of the world. (4) Local vegetation, soils, industries, and trade relations with the outside world. (5) Geography, history, and natural science. (6) Elementary biology, physics, and chemistry.

Though Ligthart was the constant advocate of activity in education, in his school the printed and the spoken word were never neglected. Known as the "magician with one-syllable words," he was himself a master of simple and beautiful prose, and with the help of his colleague, Scheepstra, he wrote a series of juvenile texts which in their day were without equal. Expressive of his pedagogical credo, these lively books blew fresh air into the Dutch schools. In their stories the authors created a number of child characters whose life and doings they narrated in four little volumes. These youngsters are seen at home and in the garden; in the streets; at work and at play. Their experiences are ours. Gradually the scene enlarges until, when the child is in the higher grades, the whole world is his.

For learned linguistic purists Ligthart had no sympathy. Piping rules of grammar and rhetoric, such men are sadly out of step with the tempo of a living, growing language. The vigor of language, this Dutch schoolman felt, depends on its response to popular usage. And that he should have been hostile to formal grammar is understandable. "We live from habit and not from logic," he once wrote. So in teaching writing to children, he

sought to liberate their self-expression: joy in spontaneous composition was the main motive of the child's writing.

Ligthart had very little use for the science of education, and in the main he held it suspect. It was chiefly through the influence of one of his colleagues, Casimir, that his attitude towards educational scientists was not altogether hostile. In his usual simplicity he felt the science of education to be altogether too vast and complicated. Pedagogy had been captured by specialists who "have divided the trunk of the tree of knowledge into innumerable branches," and with their characteristic love of microscopic details these specialists were making up teaching manuals which, with the appearance of every new edition, became more and more learned. With the specialist, erudition rather than the child's nature and needs were paramount. But Ligthart, instead of putting his faith in learned authorities, preferred to work out his educational principles in both an intuitive and an empirical way. What interested him was the child, and in particular the child in his own school. The classroom was his workroom: here he was close to reality; here he felt safe from vaporous theories and doubtful generalizations.

Whatever Ligthart believed in education, he arrived at through the test of long years of experience. Yet gifted as he was intuitively, Ligthart none the less felt the need for some more definite guide than personal judgment. "Intuition," he admitted, "does not give us scientific certitude; knowledge arrived at intuitively cannot serve to establish general laws." So through the influence of his scientific friend, Casimir, Ligthart gradually became somewhat reconciled toward the spreading objective methods of educational research, and in time he even began to show some real respect for them. Still he himself feared the experiment as a means of discovering educational principles. Admitting that scientific research may be very helpful in improving school practice, he felt that in the schoolroom every child was a special case, for whom every known general rule might constitute an exception: every child, in a word, needed the teacher's special study.

Ligthart ceased his work almost a score of years ago—he died in 1916—but he was truly the spiritual kinsman of present-day progressive educators. Like Pestalozzi he felt that the emotional bond between teacher and pupil was most important. "*Geef uself!*" he exhorted his teaching

colleagues, for only by giving himself wholeheartedly can a teacher be true to the highest ideals of his profession. The pedagogy of Ligthart came from the whole man. [Respect for the child was for him the foundation and keystone of successful teaching. Never should the child be treated as an inferior; though younger in years and experience, he was a human being, and as such he merited all the respect and consideration given to an adult. "Come what may," Ligthart said, "nothing will ever make me forsake the goodness through which I have decided to increase and strengthen the treasure of goodness which lies in the child." Only persons moved by affection could create the school atmosphere which was so essential to release the childhood spirit and set free its latent powers. More important than a teacher's training, more important than his knowledge and ability, is his personality. And in making a child a moral and social human being, the relationship between teacher and pupil is the main route to success. Moral education, Ligthart felt, is the teacher himself—"De zedelijke opvoeding—dat is de man self."

As is usual among most successful teachers, a fair part of Ligthart's success had its roots in his
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ability to understand his protégés. His method of dealing with trouble-makers, which has become famous in Holland, is the so-called "orange method." It is based on the custom of baiting flies with honey, and works similarly.

One afternoon, so the story goes, a group of youngsters gathered before Ligthart's house. Stretching their elastic young necks, they peered through the windows; and soon they were commenting disrespectfully on what they saw there. But Ligthart did not burst open the casement and reprove them; nor did he dash out into the street waving a cane. Instead, he opened his window quietly and offered an orange to each of the insurgents. Naturally, they were astounded; they reddened and retired. And they never annoyed Ligthart again. . . . Thus the "orange method" is based upon understanding—which has no foes.

Once, while a teacher of Ligthart's was conducting a singing lesson, he was suddenly interrupted. Strolling by the school, two girls of fifteen or sixteen had resolved to become a nuisance, and when they had heard the singing in the school, they had undertaken to compete. When the astonished teacher appeared at the window to

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remonstrate with them, they shouted *fortissimo*, and added grimaces to their din. After his failure to quiet them, the teacher hurried off to Ligthart for help. But the latter, characteristically, invited the recalcitrants to come into the schoolroom. This they did, somewhat hesitantly. Then, for their entertainment, Ligthart had the small children sing their best songs. Ten or fifteen minutes later, the erstwhile rowdies were completely subdued and, smiling gratefully, left the school.

Only once did Ligthart seriously question the infallibility of his method: when he applied it to a group of seven- to nine-year-old boys (not schoolboys) who were causing considerable disturbance every day after school was dismissed. To disarm them, Ligthart invited them into the school yard and garden. But instead of appreciating his hospitality, they became more disorderly than ever: they ran everywhere, helter-skelter, yelling like savages and tramping the flower beds. And against this invasion Ligthart seemed powerless. Daily he witnessed the dismal failure of his magical "orange method." Once he was even forced to struggle against the boys by forcing his door shut in their faces. At last, physically
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exhausted—for he had always been frail in body—he did some candid soul-searching. Had his method really lost its power? Had he erred in trying to apply it to this particular group? Were they perhaps one of those exceptions which spring up in the shadow of every rule?

Ligthart replied to his own questions by admitting the boys to his house the next day. When he met them at the door, he beamed upon them more cordially than ever.

“Can we come in?” they asked cautiously.

“Of course! But there’s one thing I have to tell you. You know, our pupils never yell when they are in the garden. You didn’t know that yesterday. But now that you know, I’m sure you won’t forget, will you?”

“Sure, we won’t forget. But we can come in, can’t we?”

“As long as you keep your promise—certainly.”

“And what about them—can we bring them in, too?” They pointed out two older, less amicable-looking companions.

“Of course they may come in.”

And so again the “orange method” was put to the test. Again Ligthart invited the boys into the building. But now he amazed and

delighted them with the work of the pupils. Here were remarkable models, pictures, books—such things as they had never seen. The whole spectacle sobered as well as pleased them. Excited though they were, they were careful to subdue their voices, and like dogs proudly following their master, they moved at Ligthart's heels from room to room. In some incredible fashion these boys were reforming: from a rough and roistering mob they had begun to evolve into a band of hero-worshippers. They had found a hero who was real, who understood them—*whom they understood*. Thenceforth, Ligthart's friendship was indispensable to them.

Some men call Ligthart "soft." They impugn his "orange method" as silly and flabby. They, naturally, are much stronger. Born to command, they bawl forth orders like a drill sergeant, and they always put troublesome children in their proper place; so Ligthart to them is a weakling. Of course, no appraisal could be farther from the truth. Woven from idealism, Ligthart's method in the carrying out required not only love and understanding but courage. It is not so sentimental. It is a strenuous effort "to overcome evil with good, cold with warmth, harshness with mildness, but

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also weakness with strength; finally, everything with affection." Such is the "orange method."

Though concerned chiefly with younger children, Ligthart evinced a keen interest in the adolescent and his problems of storm and stress. He exhorted parents and teachers to be tolerant of rebellious youth, which at the behest of nature was seeking its place in the world. "Every generation," he said, "if it has vitality, must be iconoclastic." The onerous load of convention, of creed and mores, he deplored; for after all they prematurely set a limit to the spiritual searchings of youth. True religion, Ligthart felt, can be found only in response to personal need and experience; and too often religious forms, having no meaning to the individual, stand in the way of true religion. Curiously enough, Ligthart has been accused by some of being materialistic, his course of study having been given a caustic dressing-down in this respect. The fact is, however, that Ligthart was deeply religious. For him true reverence was based on knowledge, the most direct road to an appreciation of the immensity of God. "Only by knowing can man be truly humble before the unknowable."

In respect to liberty the inventor of the "orange method" was by no means an extremist. In this

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domain he was mainly practical. The phrase "free education," with its great emphasis on freedom, he once remarked, often overlooked education; and schools are chiefly concerned with education. Freedom is a privilege, entailing its own responsibilities. In a school, Ligthart suggested, there may be two sorts of freedom. Thus one may say, "You may do whatever I permit," or, "You may do everything—except what I am forced to forbid." The former is more or less the traditional policy of the school; it assumes that we can make children do whatever we command. But in freedom in education lie two advantages. First,

The interest of the child is served by permitting him the greatest number of opportunities for developing all his faculties and gaining independence. Nothing is more favorable to the development of character than a régime of liberty combined with gradually increasing responsibility.

Furthermore,

The indirect gain is this: the children show their real nature in an atmosphere of freedom. In their acts and words they reveal what is going on within them, thus allowing adults to follow their development closely and to take the necessary steps for their guidance at the proper moment.

Ligthart believed that the limits put on a child's freedom depend on two things: his own interest and that of the group. Freedom is not synonymous with individual pleasure. "It is requisite for us to show by our example that duty is not necessarily a disagreeable thing, for every obligation or restriction of liberty has its attractive side, which is the pleasure of work and the satisfaction of achievement." The other extreme—to impose an unnecessary number of regulations on the freedom of the child, to force him into the paths prescribed by his elders—Ligthart feels to be unfair. "The health of the child's mind and the health of his body are at stake, for these can flourish only in an atmosphere of reasonable liberty."

If Ligthart is no extremist in the matter of pupil freedom, the same is true in the realm of discipline. What he seeks is discipline based on understanding. And since discipline is a collective force, it can be cultivated in any organization.

Though launched in another era, Ligthart's Tullingsstraat school was in essence a new school. A forerunner of the modern activity school, it anticipated many modern aspects of education. Primarily its function was that of every truly progressive school: to make men. And, as usual,

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most of its success lay in the great personality of its guiding spirit. This, as I have tried to show, was simplicity itself. But Ligthart's final and most eloquent spokesman is his tombstone, on which are the words: "All education is a matter of love, of patience and wisdom, and the latter two grow where the first prevails."

CHAPTER II

THE MONTESSORI METHOD

MARIA MONTESSORI first attracted the attention of the academic world when, toward the end of the nineteenth century, she took her doctorate in medicine at the University of Rome, becoming the first woman thus to be graduated from that eminent institution. She made her début in education in 1898. In that year, in consequence of an address she had delivered at a pedagogical congress in Turin, she was invited by the Italian minister of education to come to Rome to deliver a series of lectures on the education of feeble-minded children. In the same year there was established in the Italian capital the Orthophrenic School—a school for mentally defective children; and for over two years Dr. Montessori directed its work.

Besides training teachers for the task of teaching defectives, Montessori herself took an active part in teaching. Tours to London and Paris, where she

inspected the latest methods of teaching the feeble-minded, reinforced her classroom experience. In her work she was particularly influenced by Itard and Seguin, two pioneers in the treatment of mental defectives. The latter's monumental treatise on idiocy she translated into Italian; applying many of Seguin's ideas, she began to experiment with didactic material, and even created some of her own. Her great triumph, however, was the celebrated occasion when, by virtue of her special methods, one of her groups of subnormal children was able to pass a public examination with results that compared favorably with those achieved by normal children. These results astounded many experts, but Montessori interpreted them in her own way. "To me," she said, "the boys from the asylums had been able to compete with the normal children only because they had been taught in a different way." And also: "I found myself thinking that if, some day, the special education which had developed these idiot children in such a marvelous fashion, could be applied to the development of normal children, the 'miracle' of which my friends talked would no longer be possible."

Out of all this came a change of interest. Relinquishing her work with the feeble-minded, Montes-

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The Montessori Method

sori returned to the university. Here she studied experimental psychology and even undertook several anthropological investigations among elementary-school children. For her efforts she was rewarded with a lectureship in pedagogical anthropology at the University of Rome.

In 1906 Edoardo Talamo, Director-General of the Roman Association for Good Building, asked Montessori to "undertake the organization of infant schools" in the Association's model tenements. These houses were built in the Roman slums, and were part of a project to regenerate these sinks of society—if, also, they were part of a project designed to reap financial gain for its "backers." Each house was to have a school—or, rather, a large room—where children between the ages of three and seven might gather for work and play under the guidance of a teacher. Montessori greeted the invitation as "a great opportunity," and accepted it.

Known as the *Casa dei Bambini*—"the children's house"—the first of these schools opened in January, 1907. Health and physical and moral development were of prime import. Each house had a directress, a physician, and a caretaker. All children in the block between the ages of three and

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seven were eligible to attend, and no fees were demanded.

Before the passing of the year the Montessori schools were known all over the world. Through the efforts of Teresa Bontempi the Montessorian scheme was brought into Switzerland, and at the same time it was taken into the Argentine. In the United States it began to gain adherents in about 1910. France made its bow to the Montessori Method in 1911, when it created its first House for Children in the national capital. England's first important gesture in regard to this pedagogy had somewhat of an official air, occurring when the government sent Edmund Holmes to Rome to investigate the new schools. After a time, enthusiasm for Montessorianism reached flood heights. In 1913 there was established the Montessori Society for the United Kingdom, an organization which through its zealous efforts has done much to establish the Montessorian doctrine in England.

From the abundance of Montessorian pedagogy two ideas lift themselves above all others. The first deals with the need of freedom and spontaneity of the growing child, and the second with the importance of sense and motor training. Freedom, as pedagogically interpreted by Dr. Montessori, is

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The Montessori Method

essentially biological. The child is the proprietor of a growing body and mind whose chief need in their march to maturity is the absence of interference. Obviously negative, this attitude in its ultra-modern application demands the removal of whatever tends to interfere with the unfolding of nascent capacities. The anatomy of freedom is, however, more than the mere bones of biology. "No one," says Montessori, "can be free unless he is independent." Such a free person is one who is self-sufficient, who can do things for himself without having to call for help.

What is the significance of this theorizing about freedom? Does it mean anything educationally? Does it affect pedagogical procedure? Does it touch, even remotely, the daily doings of the teacher? Montessori thinks it does. "We must respect," she says, "the first indications of individuality. . . . To be thus helpful it is necessary rigorously to avoid the arresting of spontaneous movements and the imposition of arbitrary tasks." Traversing this highroad, a Montessori pupil selects his educational activities by and for himself, and once he has made his choice and begun to work, he is not suddenly and arbitrarily summoned by the ringing of a bell to thrust aside his work and dash

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off to something else. In the Montessori classroom the youngster learns what he wants and stays with it as long as he desires. And not only does he pick his own work: he proceeds with it at his own pace. There is no teaching of the traditional brand. A teacher is present, but she is disguised as an overseer, and her chief task is to keep the child occupied in his own way.

Free activity is the keynote of the Montessorian procedure; hence the banishment of all conventional classroom artificiality. Fixed desks and benches have been removed, and in their stead the children use regular chairs and tables which, if they choose, they may move all over the classroom. Curiously enough, this chamber is bedecked with such unacademic implements as a washstand, basins, pitchers, soap-dishes, soap, and towels, as well as a cupboard containing a complete supply of the Montessori didactic materials. Most of these articles have been put into the schoolroom to do their part in what Montessori has called the "exercises of practical life," and these exercises, directly related to her idea that freedom implies independence, have been devised to help children learn such things as dressing, keeping clean, dusting and sweeping, setting the table, serving meals,

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The Montessori Method

and so on. Even the youngest pupils are set to work on buttoning and lacing.

The fact that, with Montessori, a child is more or less his own boss does not mean that there is no discipline. Says Dr. Montessori:

Discipline comes through liberty. . . . We do not consider an individual disciplined only when he has been rendered as artificially silent as a mute and as immovable as a paralytic. . . . We call an individual disciplined when he is master of himself, and can, therefore, regulate his own conduct. . . .

^{very} Pedagogic coercion, in other words, is definitely out of place. Discipline in the Montessori school starts with work, controlled and regulated by the pupil himself. When a child gets absorbed in what he is doing, he is—in the mind of Montessori—on the road to discipline. Such interest is a direct route to concentration, and in the Montessori setting of unforced learning and unhampered action this eventually leads to self-control. This in turn is to lead to independence, and when once this is attained there is obviously no need for a superimposed and arbitrary control.

To acquire self-control, children are given hosts of opportunities. Handling their numerous implements day in and day out, they gradually

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master their use. The Montessori child, it is claimed, actually moves tables and chairs without a sound! Interestingly enough, Montessori does put some limits on non-interference: she would hinder, for example, and even "little by little suppress, all those things which we must not do." In all normal situations, however, she strives to pump discipline from the well of liberty.

Sense and muscle training, as has been mentioned, play star parts in the Montessori Method. Specifically, muscular education for Dr. Montessori means

a series of exercises tending to aid the normal development of physiological movements (such as walking, breathing, speech), to protect this development when the child shows himself backward or abnormal in any way, and to encourage in the children those movements which are useful in the achievement of the most ordinary acts of life. . . .

To train the muscles, Montessori has invented a set of special exercises as well as considerable special gymnastic apparatus. The latter includes such things as simple wire fences, wooden stairways, and rope-ladders, all of which serve "as outlets for individual activity." Like the apparatus, the special physical drills have been devised to

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train the child's natural movements under ordinary conditions.

Only simple and natural exercises receive Montessori's approval, and of these there are two main sorts—directed and free. But in the name of exercise a child may do almost anything that seems bodily beneficial. He may hurl himself on the ground, stretch himself to his heart's content, and call it a day by walking on all fours. He may climb and dangle from fences, hang from rope-ladders, and perform dozens of mysterious stunts on his patented stairway. He marches with zest, and goes through whole sets of rhythmic exercises. Still further, a front place is given to "respiratory exercises"—breathing drills designed to teach breath control and to lead in the end to correct speech habits.

Sense training with Montessori is of the highest importance. "The education of the senses," she holds, "has as its aim the refinement of the differential perception of stimuli by means of repeated exercises." Usually this sensory work is launched in an attempt to have the learner distinguish various items through his senses. Through sight and touch he may note the elemental differences between, say, circles, squares, and triangles; the

next step is to learn the names of the figures previously differentiated through the senses; and the final step is to know the constituent parts. Knowledge, let it be noted, is not the aim of these sensory drills. Notwithstanding appearances, the goal for the pupil is rather "that he refine his senses through exercises of attention, of comparison, of judgment." Pinning all these details together, Montessori has come to the conclusion that the sense exercises "are true intellectual exercises."

In the Montessorian garb, sense education has been called auto-education. Briefly, this means that once a child is familiar with the general nature of his job, he is able to proceed unassisted. Should he fall into error, he is bound in time to discover and correct it; and should he fail to find it out, it is because he is not prepared to do the particular task he chose. To assure this auto-education Dr. Montessori has created her well-known didactic materials, which, inspired by Seguin, consist of twenty-six items and provide for every sense except taste and smell, and range from simple pink cubes to musical bells and a chest of drawers containing plain insets. The youngest pupils—the three-year-olds—begin their sensory training by trying to fit wooden cylinders [28]

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of varying size into appropriate holes in a block of wood: this is a visual exercise. To develop the chromatic sense, the child is made to match colors. The thermic sense is trained by having the child put his fingers in bowls of water of different temperatures. Touch is exercised by having the pupil pass his fingertips over the object to be examined. Notably, in all this sensory work an attempt is made to make each sense as independent of the other senses as possible. So that the sense of touch, for example, will get no help from that of sight, the pupil is blindfolded; and the sense of hearing is drilled not only in an environment of silence, but also in darkness.

Dr. Montessori, it will be recalled, first attracted fame in education when a group of her defective pupils did so well in reading and writing. From this and other experiences with the subnormal mind, the Italian educator concluded that, in the process of learning to write, the pupil should be familiar with pen-holding and muscle control before he actually undertook the mental effort of learning to write. Putting these ideas to work in teaching writing to normal-minded pupils, Montessori started them off with didactic material. The pupil was given work with geometrical

figures: he traced their shapes on paper and colored them with crayons. As usual, his movements were supposed to be free and unforced; he could clutch his pencil as he chose, and wield it as he pleased. Montessori believed that "we should examine the individual who writes, not the writing." But before the children actually tried to put letters on paper, they were put through a special exercise. With their finger they traced the shapes of letters cut out in sandpaper and pasted on cards, the roughness of the sandpaper furnishing a control for the accuracy of the movements. Some children, Montessori noticed, were able to recognize letters by touch, though they could not do so by sight: in learning the letters, therefore, a child is not to rely merely on visual imagery but also on his tactual and motor experiences. After repeating these preliminaries for some time, the children naturally improve on their first performances. Finally, in the words of Montessori, they "explode into writing." Here is Montessori's own description of this phenomenon:

I said to a little five-year-old boy . . . "Draw me a picture of this chimney . . . " He got down and made a rough sketch. . . . As is my custom with little children, I encouraged him, praising his work.

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The child looked at me, smiled, remained for a moment as if on the point of bursting into some joyous act, and then cried out, "I can write! I can write!" and kneeling down again, he wrote on the pavement the word "hand." Then, full of enthusiasm, he wrote also "chimney," "roof." As he wrote he continued to cry out, "I can write! I know how to write!"¹

Progress from the preliminary muscular drill to the final act of writing requires from a month to six weeks on the part of the average four-year-old child. After three months "the pupils are generally expert."

Reading, Montessori believes, should be taught after, not before, writing. And in teaching the child how to read, the Italian educator has again developed her own method. She writes in large script the names of well-known objects on cards. The names have already been pronounced a number of times by the pupils. One of the cards is shown to the child, who is then asked to name the sounds of the letters. At first, of course, he does this with considerable hesitation; on repetition, however, he finally realizes that he is pronouncing the name of something he knows. When he has finally pronounced the word with some fluency, he puts the card under the object whose

¹ *The Montessori Method*, pp. 287 f.

name he has been pronouncing. Thus an average Montessori pupil begins to read at the age of five. Curiously enough, an English-speaking child taught by the Montessori procedure learns to read, despite the greater phonetic difficulties of his native tongue, at about the same age as the Italian child. After considerable study of the matter Montessori has decided, however, that for children under six, unless they are overstimulated, to read and write continually is not natural.

In most European lands the Montessori Method is still florescent. Relatively, as a phase of the so-called new education it is fairly old. Its success, as a matter of fact, stimulated the development of several other phases of progressive education. Without doubt the Montessori achievement gave new life to the growing belief that the group method of teaching tended to retard the educational development of the individual members of a given class, and partly as a result of Montessori's individual rather than class approach, educators started once more to hunt for better methods of teaching fairly large classes with more emphasis on the needs and ability of the individual. The celebrated Dalton Plan is but one practical outcome of this pedagogical quest. The main ideas

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of Montessori have, indeed, been frequently reëchoed by many progressive educators.

Montessori does not lack critics. Particularly among students of child psychology are some who feel that her system is not without its defects. Of these critics probably the most careful and scientific in his analysis of the Montessori procedure is William Stern, a German psychologist. Stern is not convinced that the Montessorian method is in strict accord with the tenets of scientific psychology. Moreover, he holds that the "emphasis laid upon learning or 'practice' in the children's home is unsuited to the character of the period. At this period everything the child handles or sees is the object of involuntary learning."² Hence it "is less necessary to make this learning the conscious aim of the whole of education in early childhood."³ Furthermore:

It is a mistake not only to prepare the child's occupations in such a way that in each something quite definite must be practiced, but even to arrange these occupations in a systematic sequence. That is premature transference of school methods to a period of a child's life which is not ready for the hard and fast system and the consciously fixed aims of school life.⁴

² W. Stern, *The Psychology of Early Childhood*, p. 32.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 226.

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CHAPTER III

THE WORK OF OVIDE DECROLY

OVIDE DECROLY, who is now known throughout the Old World as well as in many parts of the New for his many contributions to modern education, was born in 1871 in the Belgian town of Renaix. After the usual preparatory academic work, he began the study of medicine at Ghent, where he covered himself with distinction and eventually received his doctorate with high honors. With the help of a traveling scholarship he was able to reinforce this training with an additional half-year's study at Berlin. Finally, in 1899, he hung out his medical shingle at Brussels.

At Brussels Decroly's work in the hospitals brought him into contact with numerous defective children, and it appealed to him so much that it led him in 1901 to establish a special school for these unfortunates. At this school, which was located at Uccle, a suburb of the Belgian capital, his efforts in the pedagogical and psychological treatment of defectives were touched by

success. Indeed, so successful was he in this domain of education that he was frequently asked by interested persons to adapt his methods to normal children.

In 1907 Decroly finally yielded to these ever-increasing requests by establishing his internationally reputed *Ecole de l'Ermitage*. Less officially it is known simply as the "Decroly school." Like so many other experimental schools, the *Ermitage* was much richer in ideals than in cash. But lack of money was seized as an asset—"fortunately," Decroly once remarked, "we have never had enough money." Thus, a constant lack of money threw the school upon the initiative, ideals, and ingenuity of its supporters.

Launched with only a handful of pupils, the *Ecole de l'Ermitage* today has almost 250 youngsters in attendance. The school itself was started in a modest little house in the heart of the city, but as the years slipped by and the roster of pupils grew, these original quarters gradually grew inadequate. Some four years ago, enthusiastic supporters of Decroly started to raise funds for a new school, and today the *Ecole de l'Ermitage* is housed in a new and up-to-date building in the lovely Bois de la Cambre, a picturesque

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suburb of Brussels. Recently the school added classes on the secondary level, so that now it accommodates pupils between the ages of three and eighteen.

Decroly never deemed himself an innovator in education. But though his ideas in the main are not original, usually he strove to test them in the laboratory of actual practice. Like Dewey and hosts of others, he was convinced that education *is* life. The terse phrase, *l'éducation pour la vie par la vie*—"education for life by life"—epitomizes the Decroly pedagogy.

What is the basis of the Decroly system? Decroly himself has characterized most of his principles as biosocial and biopsychical. These principles, as is to be expected, are numerous and quite varied. They are as follows:

1. The child is a living human being who must be prepared for society. Education should aim to give him such preparation as will make him happy. The child's surroundings are to be seriously considered; likewise his disposition, acquired and inherited. His environment is to radiate happiness.

2. The child is a living, growing whole. Every year—every month, week, and day—marks a

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milestone of growth. At every age the child is different.

3. Children of the same age differ from one another.

4. Certain interests are peculiar to each age, and these varying interests should govern the mental activities of a child.

5. The most potent activity of the child's life is motor. If it has been properly fostered and encouraged, and if it has been controlled by the intellect, such motor activity is perforce associated with all other activities.

The foregoing biosocial and biopsychical principles are the stuff out of which a good school should be fashioned. Analyzed closely, such a school reveals the following features:

It should be set in a natural environment—close to the phenomena of nature. Here the child lives in the very midst of what he is learning. Here the manifestations of life are many. Here is waged the eternal and relentless struggle of living beings for adaptation to the conditions of life.

The school must not be too large. It should be coeducational and should include children between
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the ages of four and nineteen. In the larger schools coeducation should be continued till the ages of ten or twelve.

The rooms should be studios or laboratories. Here activity is king; seeing and hearing are only his liegemen. To stimulate activity the room is equipped with tables, work-benches, running water, artificial heat and lighting, shelves and counters for exhibits and collections, and so on.

The faculty obviously must be manned by capable and civilized people. Educators in the fullest sense, they should love children. They must be active, intelligent, and possessed of creative imagination and ability. They must be willing and eager to know and understand their pupils. They tirelessly seek their greatest reward in the thrill that comes from watching children grow.

Groups should be as nearly alike as possible. Backward or abnormal children should be in a special class.

The morning hours should be dedicated to number work, reading and writing, and spelling. Such exercises are to be started by means of play or games. Success and emulation are the chief incentives.

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What is left of the morning is given over to various exercises: to lessons of observation, comparison, and association; and to drawing, singing, and physical games.

The afternoons should be used for manual work and courses in the foreign languages.

For certain mornings special excursions should be planned. Hikes and visits are desirable. The children may go fishing; hunt bugs and insects for their collections; inspect factories and museums.

The parent must be taken into the school's confidence. He should be familiar not only with the problems involved in the education of his own offspring, but also with the aims and hopes, the methods and operations, of the school as a whole. He should share the teacher's zeal and the children's interests.

The fresh air of informality should sweep through the school. The system should be made understandable to the child mind. Only in this way can the youngster learn self-control and self-discipline.

To develop initiative and self-confidence, the pupils give lectures to their fellows. Subject to the approval of the teacher, the topics are

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chosen by the children themselves. Usually the subject relates to the lessons of observation and association.

Considerable stress should be laid on individual and collective work, the latter being the means to coöperation. Things made and collected by the pupils should be collectively arranged and classified. There is endless opportunity for coöperation in the maintenance of aquaria and terraria, in the replacement of worn-out or damaged objects, as well as in the general carrying on of those functions and responsibilities of the communal life of the class and the school.

The program of studies should center around the child and his world. The child and his needs are the pivots of the school's program.

The cornerstone of Decroly's method is no doubt the so-called center of interest (*centre d'intérêt*). Basically this is opposed to the time-honored procedure whereby the child's school day is arbitrarily sliced into a number of isolated academic fragments, each of which must be attended to at a given time. Of the latter procedure the tick of the clock and the sound of the bell are obsequious guardians; for they alone indicate when the child's interest is to be changed, when

reading is to be forsaken for writing and writing for arithmetic. With this arbitrary decimation of learning Decroly had little patience: what he wanted in its place was something more in accord with the child's own interests and experience. Hence, somewhat in the style of a project, the center of interest deals with a large problem, and from this sprouts learning in arithmetic, language, history, geography, and so on. Every center of interest has running through it a central idea which serves as a pivot for all the other studies.

Based on the psychology of childhood, the center of interest seeks to awaken the child's interest by harnessing his learning to his specific needs. These Decroly has classified into four types. First is the need for food; and this is connected closely with the need of correct breathing and cleanliness. In the second place, there is the combat with the elements—the struggle against heat and cold, the inclemency of the weather—and their effect on our ways of living in respect to clothing, homes, and so forth. Next is the need of protection from our enemies, common dangers that man must meet and overcome, perils that lurk both within and without. And finally, there is the need to work and to act. Each of

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these needs forms the center of interest for a year's work, the complete cycle being traced in four years.

The study of a center of interest is not launched until the child's third year in school, the child being led during the first two years to understand the nature of his needs. By the introduction of small centers of interest which are related to his immediate interest, he is gradually prepared for the larger single center of interest which is studied throughout the whole school. Such a center of interest, as has been said, covers a whole year, though when children become interested in another subject, a center of interest may be relinquished temporarily. Frequently the question has been asked whether it is wise to devote an entire year to the study of a single center of interest. Will not such a prolonged study inevitably result in boredom? If it does, certainly the followers of Decroly have been unable to detect it. As a matter of fact, some of the doctor's co-workers would give even more time to the study of a center of interest. Naturally, the study of a single center of interest by the entire school is not without influence on the school morale: it effects solidarity and coöperation, and a genuinely desirable school spirit.

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In actual practice the choice of a center of interest is not left to the children. The centers of interest were actually evolved by Decroly himself, though in their preparation and execution great freedom is left to both teachers and pupils. Plainly, if the same center of interest is to be presented to children of varying ages, the method of procedure must of necessity vary.

How is the center of interest presented? Actually, Decroly did not modify to any great extent the existing branches of learning. Because of the imposition of the official school program, the content required by the traditional Belgian school had to be accepted by Decroly in his work. Needless to say, however, Decroly's methods of teaching were quite different. All work is founded on *observation*; this is followed by *association*; and this in turn leads to *expression*. Observation is the avenue to "learning through living," and includes science and that phase of education which is sometimes designated as "education of things." Association embraces history and geography. Expression takes in reading, writing, vocabulary, language, composition, and even manual activities. Decroly was an ardent devotee of learning by doing, and reduced the use of texts to an absolute

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minimum. Every child, he felt, should make his own book, and this was to be his observation book: purely an individual, personal possession, it contains a record of the child's experiments, his collections, and other documents of personal interest.

Reading, Decroly thought, should not be taught to young children. When the subject is eventually introduced, the child should have had the opportunity to accumulate a store of experiences which will make him read to receive the ideas of others. Thus Decroly's method is ideo-visual and depends directly on observation and the centers of interest. At the outset a large number of images of words or phrases are acquired which are related to ideas suggested to or by the child and are usually associated with his games. The reading lessons are based on something the children have done, on some special occurrence, or on a project which may be in progress. It may be that the children have just visited a mill, and one of them suggests a sentence telling something about the incident. Or perhaps a child has brought something new to class—a rock, an animal, or a toy: here again is a marvelous opportunity.

Writing, taught by somewhat similar methods, becomes the handmaiden of reading. Most of the

Decroly children are able to write what they read at the end of two months, after having had one or two ten- to twenty-minute lessons every day. Gradually they compose stories of their own; and like their authors, these stories have a way of growing until in the end they occupy whole books. The older pupils write story books for their younger brethren that are, at times, delightful. They are always a source of joy to the children who create them. In the more advanced class the pupils publish a school magazine.

Arithmetic is another interesting feature of Decroly's method. The aim, as usual, is to make "relationships precise." The pupils begin by measuring themselves—their hands and feet, their height and reach, and so on. They measure tables, chairs, and even houses and the schoolyard; they count the number of steps over this or that distance. Weight is taught by having the children collect objects for weighing: thus a daily record is kept of the weight of the pet guinea-pig or tame mouse. The children weigh themselves and keep these records, also. Arithmetic, in short, lurks in every nook and crevice of the world in which the children live.

Decroly's stress on practical work also is interesting. By operating his school with as few
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servants as possible, he gave his pupils numerous opportunities to help. To keep the place clean there is a Tidy-Up Club; an entertainment prefect organizes school meetings and parties; a school meeting is held once a month, and for this a room is prepared by the children. Since the school is situated in the country, many children work also in the garden. Each child has his own special work in his group, and each group is made responsible for some particular job. Thus every morning the youngest children set the table. Several groups look after the school's pet animals and the sale of their young. Some of the older children tend the fowls, and buy and sell eggs and grain. Others buy school stationery and supplies, selling them to the various groups. Even the meals served in the school are prepared by the children. Notably, the group composed of the oldest pupils is responsible for general organization, and from it are chosen the president and his assistants.

Discipline in Decroly's school is fairly simple. Interested and active children naturally make discipline easy. Like many other modern educators, Decroly believed that children should share the responsibility for the maintenance of discipline, so that in his school there is some self-

government. A president heads the school and is assisted by all kinds of prefects. In some respects the functions of the prefects are similar to those of the Ordner at Odenwald¹ and the captain at the Ecole des Roches.² There is, for example, a "couch" prefect whose duty is to take care of some two hundred couches and blankets which the pupils use for their open-air, after-dinner siesta. An animal prefect makes his daily rounds to all the cages of the pet animals belonging to the children, to see that the pets are properly tended.

One of the highlights in Decroly's work was his ability to enlist the interest and active coöperation of parents. In 1926 a parents' association was organized, its purpose being to support Decroly in his work and also to aid in the establishment in other parts of the country of schools conducted according to his method. This was the association that collected funds to buy a new building for the Decroly school. Interestingly enough, a committee composed of two parents for each class takes part in the administration, and the members deal with all correspondence, complaints, and suggestions from other parents

¹ Cf. p. 153.

² Cf. p. 73.

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from the same class, and act as their intermediaries with the committee. Under the chairmanship of Decroly all matters of internal order and finance, also, were discussed and regulated. Four times a year all parents meet the members of the committee. On such occasions such topics as coeducation and sex education are discussed.

As has been indicated, Decroly began his educational work with defectives. This work he continued to carry on, the methods he employed being in the main quite similar to those used for normal children. The school includes not only those children who are mentally below par, but also the so-called problem child and deaf and mute children, who through their affliction have been mentally retarded and hence are in need of special attention in their education. A great deal of attention is given to physical activity, including games in the open air, work with pets, and gardening. There is much manual work of all sorts. Interestingly enough, work in reading and numbers is launched in precisely the same way as in the school for normal children, although the progress is of course much slower.

In the Decroly school the child's health and physical and mental development are constantly

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watched. A school nurse gives regular examinations. The child's diet and weight are also under the watchful eyes of his teachers. (In this school, as well as in the *Ecole de l'Ermitage*, most of the children stay for their noon meal.) Furthermore, through intelligence tests the child's mental development is kept under surveillance. One of Decroly's pet projects, we may note, was the perfection of mental tests through drawing.

As has already been said, the work of Decroly is well-known throughout Europe—thus, in his native city alone, more than ten schools are following his plan. But much of the understanding of the Belgian educator and his methods is the result of the work of Amélie Hamaïde, a tireless collaborator and enthusiastic supporter of Decroly and his work, and the author of *The Decroly Method*, which has been translated into English and German. Hence in the United States Decroly's name is known at least to most progressive educators, if not to the rank and file of practicing teachers and supervisors. Educators in South America also have reserved a very high place for the Decroly pedagogy, as is witnessed by the fact that in 1925, at the behest of Nieto Caballero, a pioneer in modern physical education,

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Decroly paid a visit to Colombia. Decroly's publications are, incidentally, numerous, and represent a mine of pedagogical information; but unfortunately they are unavailable to monolingual Americans.

In September, 1932, some of Decroly's friends and co-workers were preparing to honor him on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday. By chance, the printed announcement of the impending festivities fell into the hands of the unsuspecting doctor; and with his usual modesty he protested that such celebrations are for the dead. His words were thus almost ominous. For he died soon thereafter.

CHAPTER IV

ROGER COUSINET AND FREE GROUP WORK

IN education France is conservative. Not only is her education pinned down by a cultural tradition of ancient standing, but her centralized educational organization is of such a nature that experimentation among the schools is very difficult. Inflexible state regulations clutter up the road to educational reform, and a fairly rigid curriculum is served to all youngsters who attend the public schools. Examinations made up by the state must be passed by all the children of France. In the face of such hindrances the French public schools naturally have not been able to advance very far in progressive education. A few bold schoolmen have ventured into the arena of the new school, but their number is relatively small. Moreover, most of these pedagogic liberals are not connected with the public schools.

In the chronicles of French progressive education, as far as the public schools are concerned, the name of one schoolman stands out. He is

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Roger Cousinet, and his post is that of primary-school inspector; his doings in French public education have touched the heights, and his name has already crossed the French borders. With Madame Gueritte he organized in January, 1921, an educational society which in the French tongue is known as *La Nouvelle Education*, which in English means simply the New Education. Composed of parents, teachers, and others interested in advancing progressive education, the society has branches all over the French Republic. Each month it issues a magazine dedicated to the exposition of progressive education in other lands, and every year its members assemble in an annual convention. The founders of this association look upon pedagogy as a scientific technique, to be developed by observation and experimentation. The cornerstone on which the society has been built is the freedom of the child. In the society's own words, "the first principle of the new education is respect for the child. He is respected, because this is an indispensable condition if we are to understand him."

Besides its annual conventions *La Nouvelle Education* has held more than a dozen exhibitions of children's work. Some of these shows have

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been held at the seat of the convention; one was held at the *Musée Pédagogique*, the French educational museum, operated by the government and located at Paris. Also coöperating with progressive educational associations in other quarters of the world, the members of *La Nouvelle Education* have participated in a number of international educational congresses held under the auspices of other societies. Among the many enterprises supported by the organization are children's libraries, school printing, the Junior Red Cross, the Boy Scout movement, and those associations which favor greater attention to music and dancing in the school.

Cousinet is no facile theorist. Whatever he has contributed he has had to work out in hard practice. Originally active at Arcis-sur-Aube, later at historic Sedan and at Etampes, and now at Juvisy, Cousinet has done his work in the public school. Stated in a few words, his aim has been to find out whether children, when placed in conditions similar to those under which they play by themselves, will be better able to work by themselves. Put to work in a small way, this idea was first tried out in a single grade under a single teacher in a girls' primary school at Arcis-sur-Aube.

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Although in this one class official regulations were virtually suspended, in the other classes all official requirements held sway. A score of girls between the ages of ten and eleven formed the group. For them practically nothing was fixed in advance—no schedule, no course of study, no minimum standards. (This, even outside of France, borders on pedagogic bolshevism.) The room in which these girls worked was anything but traditional; informally arranged, it was adorned with benches around four or five tables. The pupils worked in several groups according to their interests. Seated at one table, some might be composing poetic strophes; others might be planning a play; another group might be expressing itself in art; and still another might be writing at the blackboard. Scattered individuals might be absorbed in books, one or two girls might be tending the group's plants, and some might be doing nothing at all. In many modern progressive schools such scenes are of course neither new nor startling, but in a French public school they are unique. <

During all these activities, it might be asked, what does the teacher do? At first glance her duties seem delightfully simple. She appears to be bothered with little of the usual routine. There

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is no ritualized instruction. And discipline seems to take care of itself. What, then, is there left for her to do? Actually, there is plenty to do. The teacher is constantly responding to calls for help and advice. Her influence, now wielded somewhat more covertly than under the more orthodox scheme, is none the less strong. Indeed, the new relationship to the pupils is probably much closer than the old.

Cousinet's procedure, however, is not altogether planless. At the beginning of the school year the teacher's chief task is to stimulate the pupils to bring materials to class and to make observations. Since ordinarily the normal youngster takes readily to this scheme, soon these children will be bringing material of their own accord. What they bring to class will of course be diverse in variety—pictures, plants, or even animals, dead or alive. Whatever impressions the children gather from their materials are expressed in words and drawings. And here, of course, the teacher is confronted with the specific task of teaching. For as these impressions increase in number, certain likenesses and differences will be discovered, offering a basis for classification. Finally the pupils reach the state where they synthesize their information by

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constructing charts and recording the main observations and illustrations of the group as a whole. In its last stages this is "social auto-education." Through collective study corrections are made by the pupils, and coöperation and group authority fix the standards of achievement. Obviously, then, a group that has seized the spirit of this procedure has plunged into a limitless program. The needs in one study often kindle the fires of further investigation.

Speaking of his plan in August, 1921, at Stratford-on-Avon, Cousinet said:

There is no actual teaching; the students are merely set to work. The master does not teach; he helps the workers. The children observe, search, find, design, describe, classify, and by degrees explore the universe, not with the intention of knowing it, but for the joy of exercising their minds and learning to work. *They do not memorize or recite—they act.* They function just as they did before entering school, when they were investigating the world by themselves, gathering facts, comparing and classifying them, until they discovered a few general laws—very imperfect, it is true, but sufficient to guide their future activity and supply a basis for future experiments. They were learning by doing.¹

¹ R. Cousinet, "Experiments in French Primary Schools," Bulletin No. 12, Progressive Education Association, 1922, p. 7.

And again:

My method has the advantage of avoiding the continual conditions which render scientific work so tedious for children—not to say for their teachers. What has been done in one year is not begun again the next. The repertoire is constantly enriched with new observations, and if one again takes up the index sheet, it is that he may supply notes that may be lacking, or to improve the classification by basing it upon more vital characteristics. The work is continuous, indefinitely varied, and always interesting. It is like a game, always the same, yet always different. The rôle played by the master grows ever less, collective work insuring more and more mutual corrections and uninterrupted progress.

It may be possible with such a method to cover all the matter now included in what is called the curriculum. The children have full freedom to select the subjects for their observations, and it is possible that more than a year may elapse before they desire or have the opportunity to study, for instance, a reptile, a piece of ore, or a steam engine. What does it matter that the objects studied by the children have not been selected according to a prescribed curriculum, if it is true that what really counts is not the quantity of impressions acquired by children but the capacity to learn and to unlearn which this method unfailingly developed?²

As might be expected, Cousinet's work has always been more or less hampered by educational

² *Loc. cit.*

reactionaries. But although the children who are educated under the Cousinet method must take the same state examinations as are set before youngsters who study under more conventional methods, with his much more liberal procedure Cousinet is able, it appears, to secure for his pupils a sufficient mastery of the prescribed work for which more formal methods have been devised. At the same time his method develops the pupil as a whole much more than do the older methods. Growing out of the pupil's own interests, it fosters initiative, self-reliance, confidence, and hosts of other qualities which more formal methods seldom bring forth.

The character of Cousinet's free group work is twofold: (1) it replaces individual work by group work, and (2) it permits the free choice of work. It accepts the hypothesis that children are able to work together harmoniously, and furthermore, that they care to do so. The method, according to Cousinet, can usually be launched when the child is about nine years old. Cousinet believes that between the ages of nine and twelve children naturally form into groups for play. Moreover, they are allowed to choose activities just as they choose their games, and thus they are fairly inde-

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Roger Cousinet and Free Group Work

pendent of adults: they may select their own activity, pursue it as long as they care, and stop at will. These activities, as Cousinet explained at the Fifth World Conference, held in Denmark in 1929, are multifarious. They include³

. . . manual work (drawing, painting, sewing, acting, gardening), concrete creative activity—literary work (writing and reading original stories, poems, plays), abstract creative activity—scientific work (observation, description and classification of plants and animals), work in history—observation, description and classification of documents relative to the history of civilization, work in geography (observation, description and classification of geographical phenomena observed during walks), work in arithmetic (solution of problems arising out of the other activities and invention of original problems).

As has already been said, the activities are neither fixed nor complete. They develop continuously in the course of practice. But obviously, if Cousinet's group method is to work successfully, it must be tried out in a room which is large enough to accommodate several groups, and the groups must have space enough to work without interfering with each other. Cousinet's experience indicates that the most workable group number

³ W. Boyd (Ed.), *Towards a New Education*, pp. 163 f.

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is six; moreover, he feels that groups usually establish themselves by the end of a month at the latest. Tests show that the groups formed are fairly homogeneous and that "there are no groups in which one child is superior to the others and directs their activities." Each group has a blackboard as well as a small cupboard and a library, and if possible a garden. Experience shows that during the year the children do not neglect any form of activity, and that they always keep busy. Contrary to the numerous contentions of more conservative educators, the Cousinet method does not produce loafers.

Cousinet has summarized his method of free group work along three main lines. First, it is important that children be allowed to group themselves as they please, for only in this way will a group be natural from the child's own point of view. There is to be no adult interference, direct or indirect: thus a child is not to be forced into a group; nor should a group be coerced into accepting or rejecting a youngster. In the second place, a group should not be disturbed or interfered with when at work—if there are any slackers or incapable children in a given group, the group itself can be counted on to oust them. Finally, though

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Roger Cousinet and Free Group Work

the hallmark of Cousinet's method is freedom, it is none the less essential that the children should form the habit of correctness. When work is finished, the teacher should indicate its faults in form.

What are some of the less measurable results of Cousinet's method? For one thing, the comradeship among the children appears to have been put on a more real and firmer foundation. There are fewer quarrels; the children seem to be able to make sacrifices for one another with much more grace and ease. In general the social tendencies of the girls have received a decided impetus, as is revealed both in their games and in their work. Moreover, Cousinet has found that between the ages of ten and eleven children are able to apportion their tasks: with free group work the division of labor makes an early début. In some groups, for example, one or two students look after the correction of spelling in the group's written work. Still another tributary outcome of Cousinet's procedure concerns leadership: the undesirable authority which is based on mere physical superiority, which loses its force if work is involved and often falls into bullying and teasing, has been minimized at the Cousinet school.

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Free group work, in developing a balanced personality, depends upon coöperation. Yet this coöperation plainly does not crush the individual. Actually, free group work permits the child's personality to assert itself; the work is the consequence of the initiative, as well as the participation, of each individual. The shyest youngster, indeed, finds a willing audience in a group which has a common problem.

CHAPTER V

THE ECOLE DES ROCHES

LOCATED on one of Normandy's high plateaus some two hours from Paris is the Ecole des Roches, one of France's leading progressive schools. It was established in 1899 by Edmond Demolins. Demolins himself first appeared in the public spotlight in 1897, when he published his well-known *A quoi tient la supériorité des Anglo-Saxons?*¹—a treatise which has since been translated into at least a dozen tongues, including Arabic and Japanese. In setting his lenses over this so-called superiority, Demolins concluded that at least one potent cause of it was to be found in education; and, furthermore, that education in England was characterized by broader goals and more natural methods than in France. No wonder, then, that after the appearance of his study inquiries began to shower upon Demolins. "What must we do," many Frenchmen wanted to

¹ "Wherein lies the superiority of the Anglo-Saxons?"

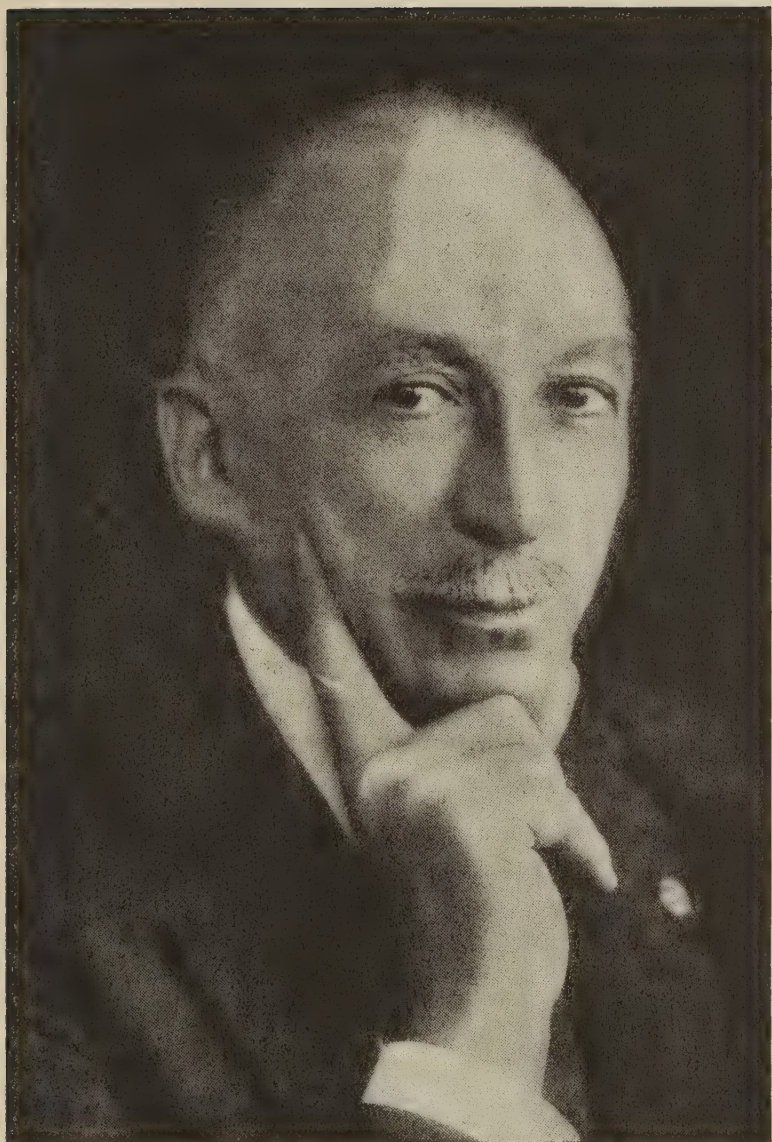
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know, "to provide an education for our children that will insure individual and national supremacy?" But Demolins' answer came in dual form. First, he wrote another book, *l'Education Nouvelle*, wherein he set down his ideas on progressive education; then, in 1899, with the help of converted friends he founded the Ecole des Roches.

The Ecole des Roches was prosperous from the start, and like many another successful venture, it inspired imitators. Yet to this day it has remained the most important institution of its kind in the French Republic. Demolins died in 1907, but his ideals were taken up by two able and excellent followers, Paul de Rousiers and Georges Bertier, both of whom are still with the school. The latter, in particular, is a strong figure in French progressive education. As editor of *l'Education* he wields a spirited and potent pen, and it was largely through the vigorous efforts of this magazine that the French public gradually became more familiar with the ideals of modern education.

Many members of the school's staff have been in the service of des Roches for a long stretch of years. For a boys' school the Ecole des Roches, interestingly enough, has a large number of women on its faculty. Many of them are full-fledged

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GEORGES BERTIER

instructors, mainly for the younger boys, but some teach maturer lads. In a boarding school of the type of des Roches the women naturally have a remarkable opportunity to contribute a great deal to the home life of the pupils. The des Roches faculty, notably, is treated in a very civilized way. Most of their number live in the houses with the pupils, where they share many of the boys' activities. After meals, however, they usually gather in the salon, where over their coffee cups they find the stimulating comradeship of adult society. Every three weeks faculty teas are held at which, along with a general discussion, an educational discourse of some sort is usually the main feature.

Some three hundred boys between the ages of eight and nineteen are enrolled at des Roches. A few girls attend, but thus far there has plainly been no serious attempt at coeducation. Most of the des Roches registrants of course are French, but several have come from other lands. Somewhat as at Odenwald,² des Roches divides its pupils into house groups. In the French school, however, the more lavish freedom of the German Odenwald is absent.

² Odenwald is a German progressive school. (See page 139 ff.)
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Each house group is in one of the six buildings and has its own special arrangements for home life. Connected with the house are gardens and domestic animals, which give the boys a fine opportunity for practical work. Most of the houses accommodate some fifty boys. One building, however, has been set aside for a very small number of pupils who, for the most part, require some kind of special attention and individual instruction from the school staff.

Like most progressive schools, des Roches seeks to train the whole child. Strong and healthy bodies, open and cultured minds, and independent, self-reliant, moral human beings are the goals. "Our first aim," says Bertier, the present director of the school, "is to make of our students strong and generous personalities capable of solving tomorrow's problems in the best way." Des Roches, it may be noted, is one new school that considers religion as an essential part of moral development: not only is religious instruction given in the classroom, but every effort is made to develop "an ideal Christian." Yet education at des Roches is, of course, also a social matter. "We seek," explains Bertier, "to promote the progress of present society."

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How does des Roches propose to carry out its high aims? How, to use its own terms, does it expect to develop men who are free, and yet willing and eager to serve their fellowmen? What does it do to develop men who are, as its motto reminds us, *bien armés pour la vie*?

Des Roches stresses, for one thing, the development of individuality; it permits considerable individual freedom. On the vast seventy-acre estate the pupil is allowed to move about without undue restriction; on the school grounds, which are marked by neither fences nor walls, he may move at will. He goes freely to all his work, and at least two hours of his daily time he disposes of as he deems fit. Study hours, free time, excursions, and numerous other doings are organized by the pupils themselves. "No pressure is exerted upon them, and if we strive to counsel and guide them, we never force them." Moreover, at des Roches freedom is harnessed to the child's character development. Over the school there seems to hover an atmosphere of right and fair play—former students of des Roches sometimes refer to their alma mater as the school where nobody tells a lie, an attitude due largely to the high ideals of the school as well as to the absence of coercion. One man, associated

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with des Roches for three decades, can proudly report that during all the years of his des Roches experience, whenever he has had to inquire about some student offense, whether of trivial or serious nature, he has always received a prompt and truthful admission from the guilty youngster. Such a superb record is the result of a practice which is grounded on the idea that the best way to develop straightforwardness in children is to give them our fullest confidence.

In educating its pupils socially, des Roches expects them to shoulder responsibility. In every domain of school life the boys play an important part in directing their own activities. Individuals charged with special duties and obligations are to be found in the classrooms, in the studies, in the libraries, and almost everywhere else. Committees presided over by the students themselves run the school's chief activities. Thus there is a committee in charge of the school paper, the *Echo des Roches*. Another committee oversees athletics. There is a committee for manual work; another for charity and social work; and one which is in charge of the appearance of the school and its grounds. Known as the *Commission de Beauté*, the latter body is made up of adults and pupils, among its

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maturer members being a technical adviser and an architect. The committee takes its work seriously and does much more than pick up rubbish and plant signs which invite the populace to keep off the grass. It attends to the landscaping and the keeping of the lawns and walks, and now and then it even recommends the destruction of a building which in time has degenerated into an eye-sore. Judged by the superb appearance of the school and its grounds, the *Commission de Beauté* understands its business.

Charity work occupies a front place at des Roches. The main responsibilities here fall on the shoulders of the *Société de Charité*. The students make regular visits to the poor of Verneuil, which though not a large town affords more than adequate case material for the welfare workers of des Roches. Particular attention is given to those unfortunates who are not to blame for their misery. Some of the concrete help offered by the des Roches boys takes the form of bread, milk, meat, and other victuals; for exceptionally needy cases there are donations of coal and wood, clothing, shoes, and so on. Sometimes these young humanitarians help to pay overdue rent; sometimes they pay bills that have been incurred

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by sickness or accident. Usually the same pupil visits the same family for a number of weeks, and now and then he is joined by one of his comrades, who acts as a sort of understudy. The des Roches boys of course also participate in most of the regular and well-known charity ventures, such as the Red Cross, the Sisters of Charity, and the Christmas fund. Since most of the boys come from fairly well-to-do homes, this charity work of course takes on a particular importance.

One of the most important committees is that of the captains, of which there are several kinds, as for example: head dormitory captain, under captain, captain of the house, school captain, and general captain. The captains' duties are somewhat akin to those of the Ordner of Odenwald.³ Briefly, the captains are commissioned to keep a watchful eye on dormitories, studies, games, leisure activities, and the like. To their comrades the captains play the part of big brother. Monsieur Bertier writes:

With us the captain is truly the servant of the boys of whom he is chief. He looks after their health, work, and morality. His position depends upon the perfection of his service. . . . To the corps of captains of the

³ Cf. p. 153.

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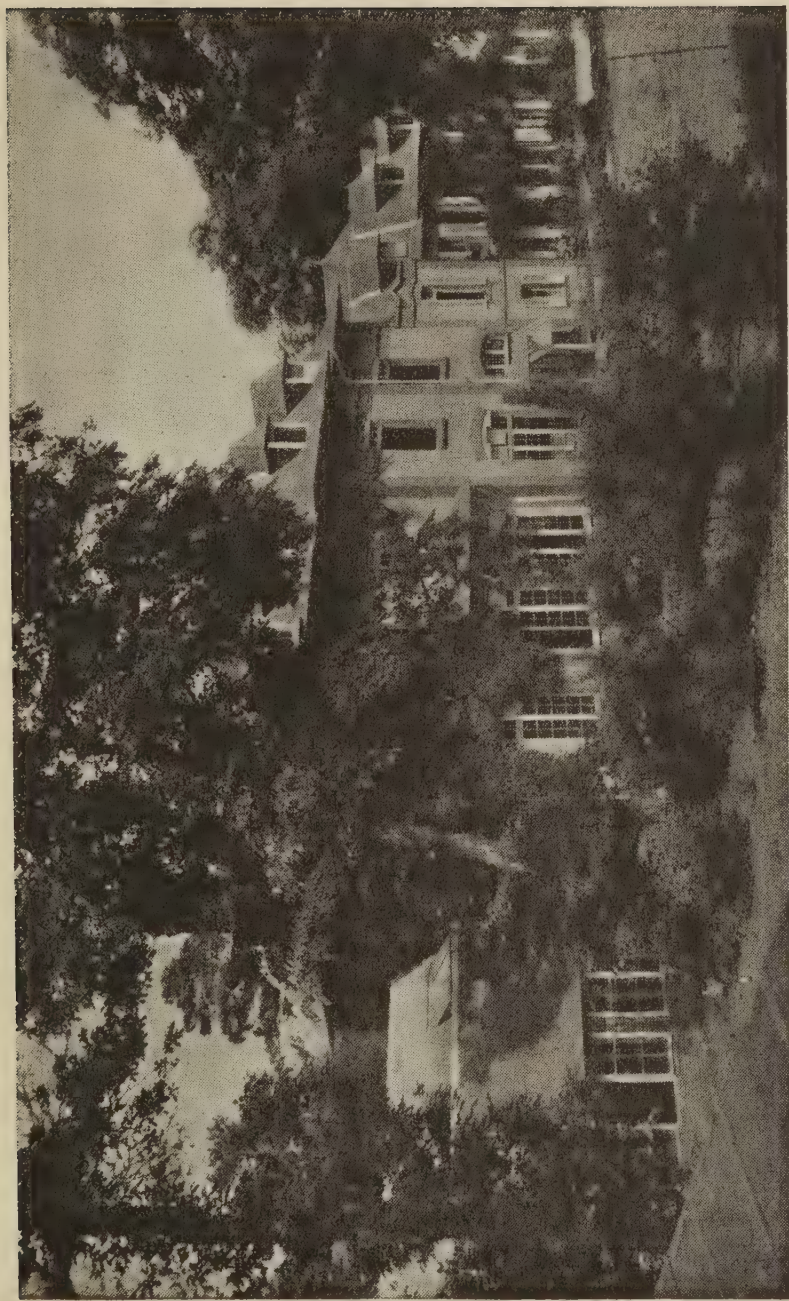
Ecole des Roches is due in large part the maintenance of the school's spirit and its high moral ideal. I myself preside every fortnight over the captains' council, and I have never left these meetings without being impressed by their concern to improve the school.

To be a captain is of course a high honor. Naturally, only the maturer boys gather such distinction.

In the main building one finds most of the classrooms and laboratories, as well as the assembly hall, but scattered through some of the other houses are a number of group rooms. Classes, as in most of the new schools, are small, and this of course permits some degree of informality. The fact, moreover, that this is a boarding school where everybody is acquainted with everybody else, also tends to mellow the usual classroom formality. And the curriculum, as might be expected, leans to the modern side. In its own words, l'Ecole des Roches "puts a premium on serious study based on a solid foundation, and conducted by the most lively methods, best adapted to stir the imagination and to stimulate the reason, and resulting in a genuine 'general culture.'"

The work of the school leads to the usual baccalaureate, for which at the end of their

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LA MAISON DU VALLON: THE ORIGINAL BUILDING OF THE ECOLE DES ROCHES

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school work the students must take the regular state examinations. State supervision is not required at des Roches, yet the school welcomes such inspection; in fact, state inspectors who have visited the school hold it in high esteem. In the baccalaureate tests the school ranks with the best; although these examinations are not particularly easy—and never have been—in 1930 some ninety per cent of the des Roches candidates came through with flying colors.

With respect to the modern languages, it is well worth noting that all des Roches students who do not take up Latin must study either English and German or English and Spanish. A modified direct method—which does not ban grammar altogether—is used, a part of which is the scheme whereby pupils are sent to the land whose language they are studying. With the parents' consent, a boy may be sent to a progressive school or to a private family in England, Austria, or Germany for from three months to a year. Whoever receives the boy must guarantee not to admit any other French pupil at the same time—this is to preclude the visiting des Roches lad's talking in his native tongue. The esteem in which proficiency in the modern languages is held is [76]

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plainly evidenced in the school's annual yearbook. In scanning the roster of the pupils, one finds recorded after certain names whether the boy speaks Spanish or German or English, or some other language, as the case may be. And after other names is recorded the fact that the student has spent, say, five months in England and three in Germany, and that he speaks the languages of both.

As in many new schools, des Roches reserves its morning hours for intellectual work in the classroom and the late afternoon for study. Thus that part of the day best suited for outdoor activities is left free for practical work, games, athletics, and the pursuit of hobbies. Since the school is fairly large, a division is made between labor and sports. Thus while one group is enjoying itself on the field, another will be channeling its energies into some form of practical work; on the morrow, however, the two groups exchange their places.

Everyone at des Roches must do something practical, and the jobs undertaken are generally of a useful sort, representing an economic gain for the school. Garden work is offered with an array of opportunities in elementary agriculture; more

advanced work in agriculture may be had in a nearby agricultural school. The shops for wood and metal work are excellent and well-equipped; there is a special department for bicycle repairs, in which the boys become familiar with the art of repairing their own wheels; and a number of well-stocked studios for the arts and crafts offer practical creative work of another variety. But the *Ecole des Roches* stresses practical work not only for the usual pedagogic reasons but also for social reasons. The pupils, it seems, work for others—either for their fellow-students or for members of their family. One day when Monsieur Bertier went on his rounds through the carpentry shop, he found that “all were engaged on work for their brothers, sisters, parents, or masters.” A great deal of the practical work is coöperative, as in the making of a wireless set or an iron gate for the school. In some of the crafts an interesting variation of the guild system has been evolved—a bookbinding guild, a pottery guild, and almost any other guild. At the head of each organization is a master. To him the pupils apply for apprenticeship, and after they have served their probationary period, they are accepted as apprentices; or they may be rejected if they are found

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incapable of doing the guild's specialized work in a satisfactory manner. This scheme is of course not unique, being found in several progressive schools.

Because of its great stress on physical training and athletics—an emphasis which in France is much rarer than in England and the United States—the Ecole des Roches has been nicknamed the “sports school.” Every day each pupil has an hour of gymnastics, and three afternoons a week are dedicated to sports. Inter-house games as well as athletic events with other schools are engaged in, association football, hockey, basketball, track, tennis, fencing, swimming, and boxing having become some of the more popular sports. For the pursuit of sports the school is indeed unusually well-equipped. Besides having its own stadium, it has a half-dozen playing fields that can be used for hockey or football, a number of basketball and tennis courts, a swimming pool, and a shooting range; and for those who want it there is also plenty of opportunity for horseback riding.

CHAPTER VI

THE SCHOOL OF BERTHOLD OTTO

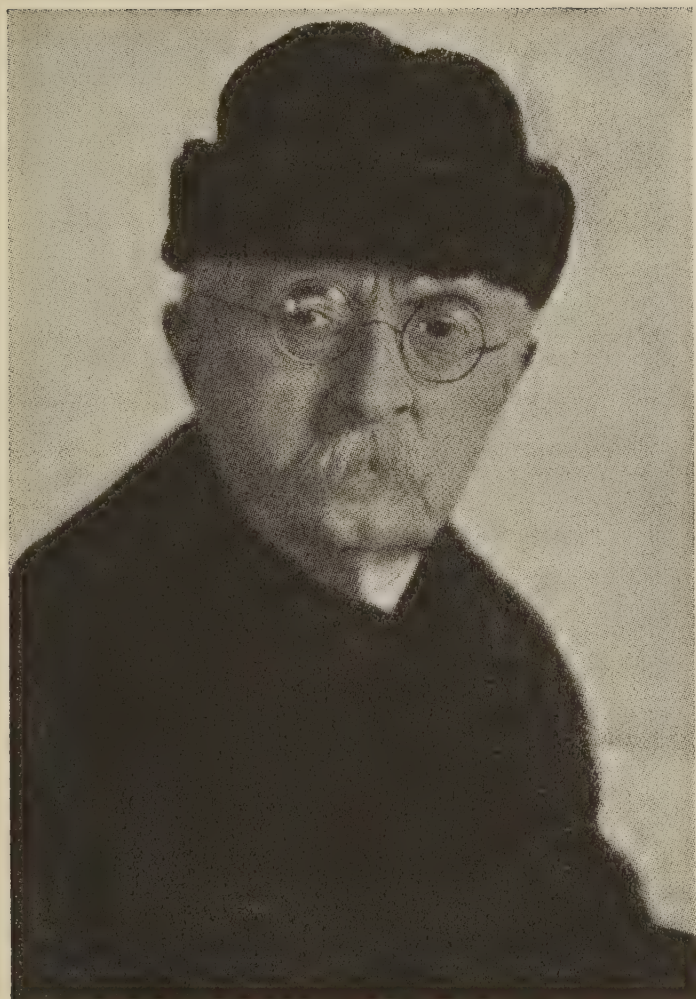
AT Lichterfelde, a suburb of bustling Berlin, there was founded in 1906 a school which eventually became known as the Berthold Otto Schule. This school, oddly enough, derived its name from the efforts of both its friends and its foes. The former christened the new institution in honor of its founder, in whom they beheld a progressive educational reformer of gigantic stature; the school's opponents, on the other hand, named the school after its creator because they were determined to impress upon the world their conviction that the Lichterfelde school was simply the private venture of an eccentric pedagogue whose ideas at best were impractical. Since those early days the currents of pedagogy, as everybody knows, have shifted considerably. Berthold Otto's school, beginning precariously, gradually gained strength, until finally it matured into one of Germany's well-known schools. Berthold Otto's work itself has taken on significance. It still evokes

bitter criticism; yet without question it has earned for its inspirer a front place in the ranks of modern German educators.

Born in Silesia in 1859, Otto sprang from a family of landowners. His father was a pastor, who, nevertheless, in the war of 1867 had exchanged his sacerdotal robes for the more worldly uniform of a Silesian officer. Both parents were cultured, and both took great pains to develop a questioning, critical attitude in their offspring. Moreover, they preferred to raise their children with love and understanding rather than with rattan and ironclad discipline. These happy, youthful days at the domestic fireside, one may conclude, are largely responsible for the important place Otto assigns to the family as an educative force.

In 1878 Otto matriculated at the University of Kiel. Here he came in contact with the philologist Lübbert, under whose tutelage he began to specialize in the classics. But Lübbert lacked the necessary spark to set off Otto's enthusiasm. Instead of dealing with broad and fundamental matters in language, Lübbert busied himself with minor details. So after a year at Kiel, Otto went to the University of Berlin, where he continued the work he had started but also investigated the

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BERTHOLD OTTO

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mysteries of economics, finance, politics, history, and education. Privately, moreover, he undertook a detailed study of the Faustian literature, which even in those days had reached a vast magnitude. It was at Berlin, also, that Otto came under the influence of the celebrated Friedrich Paulsen. No other course of lectures influenced him nearly so strongly as those of Paulsen. Otto has since said,¹

The ideas that in instruction the main thing was not the subject but the child, that childhood was not merely a period of preparation but possessed value of its own, and hence was not to be carelessly let go to waste, made a great impression on me. In everything connected with education, I do not believe I ever went a step beyond the limits sketched for us by Paulsen.

Another Berlin professor who helped to put Otto into the ranks of progressive educators was the gifted Steinthal. He kindled in Otto a scientific interest in the instructional process, and convinced his student of the value of child psychology as a teaching. From Steinthal Otto also learned to recognize the value of child linguistics. This influence is plainly perceptible today in Otto's pedagogics, in which he lays such stress on the importance of approaching the child on his own linguistic level.

¹ *Psychologie des Unterrichts*, p. 113.

The School of Berthold Otto

While studying at Berlin, Otto also reaped his first teaching experience. This he had as a private tutor. Curiously enough, he looked upon his charges at that time as "impossible dolts," and the instruction which he gave in those days he has since described as "coercive instruction of the worst sort." Paulsen, who wanted Otto to concentrate on his own studies, advised his student against the addition of such extra burdens. But Otto, it appears, looked upon his teaching with an experimental eye. "Every hour I learned more than I taught," he has since confessed to his co-workers.

After quitting the university, Otto was in turn a proofreader, journalist, and tutor, and was on the editorial staff of *Brockhaus*, the well-known German encyclopedia. When he also undertook the teaching of his four daughters, the Saxon school authorities looked upon him with grave suspicion, and after warning him several times—always without effect—they got an order for his punishment. Otto, however, countered with an appeal to the Saxon ministry of education, which in the end decided in favor of the appellant. Thus, much to the chagrin of the astounded pedagogues of Leipzig, the triumphant Otto now received official

permission from the Kingdom of Saxony to instruct his children himself, and at home.

This battle with the Saxon obscurantists definitely put Otto into the ranks of the pedagogues. Under the influence of the excitement of the time he fashioned his *School of Force and Punishment—Die Zwangs- und Strafschule*, a vigorous blast against traditional education. At this time also he became editor of the weekly, *Deutsche Schulreform*, which aimed to investigate political and educational problems under the searching rays of psychology. But in 1901 Otto and a Leipzig physician launched their own magazine, the *Hauslehrer*. This sought to stimulate parents to educate their children along the lines employed so successfully by Otto in the instruction of his own children, and was intended not only for parents but also for children. All sorts of topics, from the Faustian legend to self-instruction in Greek, occupied its interesting pages and, oddly enough, it drew applause from one of the most unexpected quarters, namely, a group of secondary-school teachers. The head of a Magdeburg gymnasium showed considerable enthusiasm for Otto and his work. And eventually the Prussian ministry of education, under the direction of Dr. Althoff,

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became cognizant of Otto's efforts. The Prussians must have held them in fairly high esteem, for soon they offered Otto an annuity of 3000 marks to transfer his activities to Berlin. The offer came in 1902, and since no unusual strings were tied to it, Otto accepted the proposal and prepared to take up his work in that city.

Four years later Otto launched his school at Lichterfelde. This school was more or less due to a growing need. The material which had been set down in the *Hauslehrer* had been based chiefly on Otto's work with his own children; but since these were now rapidly growing up, Otto felt that he had to look for pupils with whom he could enter into the same intellectual relationships as he had had formerly with his own children. The school was started in Otto's own home with an enrolment of seventeen children. In the fall of 1907 it was closed by the Prussian school authorities because it did not, as they thought, meet the official requirements. The Prussian ministry, however, after a searching inspection of the Otto school and its master's methods, rescinded the order. By 1911 the school had grown so far beyond its original limits that it was moved into a new building, the money for which had been donated by one

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of Otto's admirers. After the war the Prussian government even began to subsidize Otto.

What is the essence of Berthold Otto's pedagogy? First of all, let us view his aim. This, as with many other educators, is personality. Otto, however, leans to the view that we do not know in which direction a man will develop: his stress therefore, is on the development of individuality. Fundamentally, Otto is opposed to what he has called the "coercion and standardization" of the old school. Any education which overlooks the individual child is under his ban. The old coercive and standardized education he would replace with one of "organic growth," which seeks to develop the child's individual mind and spirit and body. Education is not to be fashioned and imposed on children from above by adults—the fault of the old militaristic state with its stress on strict order and obedience, on formal training and examinations. Instruction should take the child as its starting point. It is to be *vom Kinde aus*, or as we say in English, "child-centered."

The relationship between teacher and pupil should be modeled on the relationship existing between parent and child at home, Otto thought. Here he is obviously thinking of his own home. By [88]

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nature, he believes, children seek to adjust themselves to their environment; their natural inquisitiveness leads them to explore the world about them, and only when they reach snags do they turn to adults for help. This situation Otto would reproduce in school. Before the child enters school, he seizes his knowledge from every propitious occasion, and he asks questions on all subjects. The average school has tended to repress this questioning attitude. Instead of harnessing to his education the child's natural curiosity, the conventional school has fed him formal and intellectual fodder, for which very often he has no appetite. Reading and writing were conventionally the starting points of instruction, and these Otto would replace by objective language instruction on the child's linguistic level, in which his *elementary vocabulary* and, if necessary, even his dialect would be used. Such instruction is to stretch over several years, and in this way is gradually to bridge the gap between the playroom and the schoolroom. Instruction, Otto feels, should be generated by the questions of the pupils and the answers of their fellows and teachers.

This theory of instruction is the basis of the so-called *Gesamtunterricht*, a form of integrated

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instruction which is the chief feature of Otto's school. The whole school, composed of some fifty to eighty children between the ages of six and nineteen years, as well as the faculty and visitors, participates in it. The group meets in an assembly-room three or four times a week between the hours of twelve and one o'clock; or, when the weather is mild, the meeting is held outdoors. In the assembly-room are no fixed benches. Instead of sitting in rows as in the traditional meeting, the boys and girls sit around the walls, thus forming an immense circle in which everybody can see everybody else. The teachers sit here and there among their pupils, neither as guardians nor as officials, but as comrades and friends. Observing the youngsters happily seeking their places and voicing friendly greetings to their fellows, one feels very much like the Swiss father who visited Pestalozzi's school and there exclaimed, "Why, this isn't a school at all: this is a family!"

When the business of the assembly is finally launched, the chairmanship is usually assumed by Otto. The children seem to have mastered the art of self-control. To get order no bells have to be rung; no orders barked; no warnings issued. The children whisper and move if they feel so [90]

The School of Berthold Otto

inclined, but never in any seriously disturbing way. Some girls may be knitting or crocheting; here and there some boys may be perusing books: the pupils, in a word, have real liberty, and this they use like responsible men and women. The assembly usually begins with routine business of common interest; thus, plans for a hike may be brought up and discussed. Once these matters are out of the way, one proceeds to the "order of the day." A pupil may bring up any subject he wishes, and whatever it is, it is discussed as long as it holds interest. Sometimes the discussions originate from a composition presented orally by one of the group, but more usually the discussions are started by questions, which, as has been indicated, are left entirely to the choice of the child. Thus someone may want to know something about Einstein or the shape of the eyeball or the nature of fire. In answering, the youngest students are given the right of way; then come the older children, and finally the guests and teachers. Not everyone takes part in the discussion; indeed, the majority seem to be indifferent to what is being said. There is no attempt to force attention; nor is anyone hypocritically pretending to pay attention. The assembly, Otto feels, is nothing more than a large

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family in which the individual members learn from one another. Often, in fact, this learning is going on unknown to the learner.

What sorts of questions are discussed at these meetings? As in Otto's *Hauslehrer*, a vast array of topics is considered in the course of the year. A glance at the minutes of these meetings reveals such subjects as airplane speeds, explosions, wireless telegraphy, language, sound, alcohol, nicotine, and revenge; talking pictures, orthography, the meaning of prose, lies, Prussian log cabins, and so on. In the average assembly from three to four topics are usually discussed. Importantly, a careful analysis of the topics considered during the school year shows that not only all the so-called school subjects come up for discussion, but also a great many other significant matters which are not considered in the average classroom.

What, then, are the results of Otto's *Gesamtunterricht*? The answer is not easy. For fundamentally the most valuable outcomes of Otto's assembly are not measurable. The mental and emotional stimuli engendered by a discussion, the kindling of multifarious interests, the intellectual activity of the pupils, and the development of their self-confidence and self-reliance—these are among the

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invisible and imponderable growths from Otto's *Gesamtunterricht*.

Pupils at Lichterfelde are divided into four groups—the beginning, the elementary, the intermediate, and the advanced. Each of these groups has integrated instruction of its own, the advanced group getting about two hours a week and the others receiving more. Instruction, curiously enough, is given in any subject the children may want. Theoretically, if sufficient children wanted a knowledge of Chinese or astrophysics, such instruction would be given. Some of the most popular subjects, remarkable to say, are mathematics and the classics. Otto himself gives instruction in Latin—but though he is the author of a Latin text for beginners, he prefers to teach without a book. His method of presentation is to a large degree spontaneous, and depends importantly on the questions raised by the pupils. Rote learning of course does not meet with Otto's approval. However, since language mastery is impossible without a knowledge of at least elemental forms, some memorizing is of course necessary; and, recognizing this need, Otto strives to make the memorizing process as simple and attractive as possible. In harmony with the principle that as

far as possible play should be harnessed to learning, Latin is far from being treated as a dead language, and hence somewhat of a disagreeable spectre in the classroom: it is taught as if it were actually a living tongue. In Otto's Latin class the humanistic spirit exists at its best. Like the celebrated Wimpfeling of the fifteenth-century humanists, Otto holds that Latin instruction should be much more than an accumulation of forms and vocabulary. The learner should become privy to the spirit of the Roman tongue, and so should be encouraged to use it in conversation.

Formalism is reduced to a minimum, not only in Latin instruction but in all classes. Indeed, so far has formalism been driven into the background that even teachers of the progressive wing, on visiting Otto's school, are at times amazed. Free discussion, individualization, and learning by doing are the desiderata, though in the realm of self-activity Otto's practice varies considerably from the more orthodox varieties.

Berthold Otto's school has also devoted considerable time to the development of the so-called pupils' court—the *Schülergericht*. From the very beginning Lichterfelde has encouraged students

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to participate in the running of the school. And how well children can handle their own affairs is especially evident in the way Otto's protégés take care of disciplinary matters. At first, when the school was small and the pupils were, so to say, nothing more than a large family, no particular organization was necessary. As Lichterfelde's enrolment began to swell, conditions naturally became more complex; disputes among students increased. But Otto refused to have anything to do with the settlement of such disputes. Hence, with the faculty on the sidelines, the pupils took matters into their own hands, and out of this situation sprang an organization of justice which summoned student disturbers of the peace, tried them, and pronounced sentence. This organization, however, was rather secretive in its doings; certainly it was not democratic; nor were its verdicts always above suspicion. And too often it was unable to carry out its dictates, for the malefactors were the very ones who refused to acknowledge the authority of the organization: in the main, right went to might. Now Berthold Otto, of course, saw the limitations of this organization; yet with his unbounded faith in the ability

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of children to solve their own problems, he refused to interfere. And his faith, it seems, was amply justified. For gradually the youngsters became dissatisfied with their primitive and inefficient way of settling disputes. A change, they realized, was necessary. So at a gathering of the entire school in the *Gesamtunterricht*, the students at last organized in a different way. To settle their difficulties they selected an arbiter, and to help him, a corps of assistants, constituted equally of boys and girls. The next step was to make laws, and the next the task of enforcing them. Thus, as time slipped by, the pupils at last evolved a form of court trial, which in some ways imitated adult procedures and in others blazed its own way. The severest punishment which can be meted out, incidentally, is the student's exclusion from school for several days. Furthermore, as far as their children are concerned, parents must accept the decisions of the pupils' court.

This form of self-government has reached such heights of efficiency that Otto is able to entrust all matters of school discipline to it. Its success is due, one may conclude, largely to the fact that it is actually run by the students themselves. The teachers really have learned how to assist rather

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than to dominate. The whole organization and its work, moreover, have their roots in the very fertile soil of actual, practical need. Here we have no unworkable system generated in the over-imaginative mind of a cloistered pedagogue. What the students do at Lichterfelde is prompted by their own immediate and living needs.

CHAPTER VII

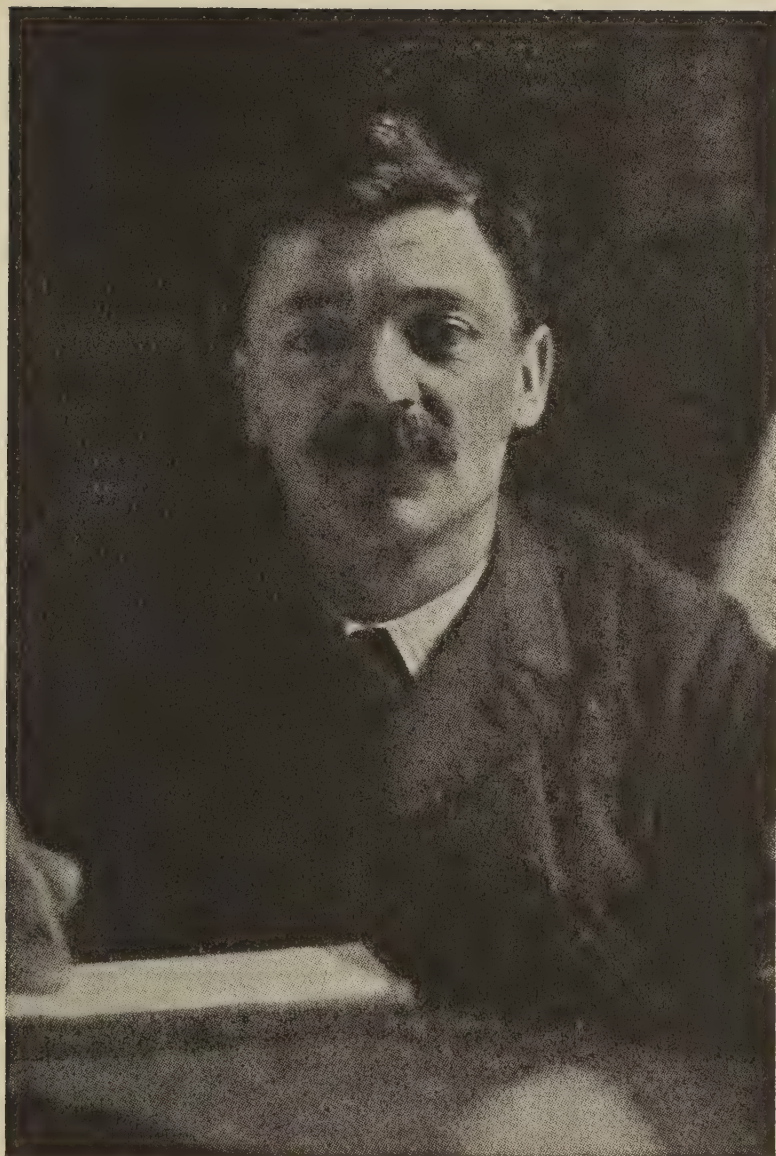
LIETZ AND THE COUNTRY-HOME SCHOOLS

HERMANN LIETZ founded the first of Germany's *Landerziehungsheime*, or country-home schools, at Ilsenburg in 1898. Three years later the second of these schools (of which the Germans often speak as the "L. E. H.") was set up at Haubinda, in beautiful Thuringia. And, after another three-year interlude, the third and last Lietzian academy came into existence, this being established in an old castle, once occupied by the bishops of Fulda, and overlooking the picturesque river Rhön. Crowded out by the demands of industry, the original school at Ilsenburg ceased in 1924. Yet there are today six other country-home schools, all modeled and run on Lietzian lines, and enrolling some five hundred pupils. There are also many offshoots and imitations of the L. E. H., both in Germany and in other lands. These in many respects preserve the main ideal of Lietz, but differ in their fundamental reasons for being.

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Hermann Lietz himself was born in 1858 on the island of Rügen, in Pomerania, and was the son of a farmer who owned a fairly large portion of land. Here on the parental domain the boy led a happy and unhampered life; physically, mentally, and spiritually he was allowed to grow without much interference. But when thrust suddenly into school at Greifswald, a boarding academy in the city, he had no little difficulty in adjusting himself to his new environment. A true sample of the old-time intellectual drill-house, the Greifswald school failed dismally to aid him. It completely overlooked the boy's strong urge for self-expression, which even then was potent. Instruction was of the conventional sort, putting the pupils under the heavy yoke of knowledge and forgetting entirely that they were interested in life. And since Lietz failed to respond to the ordinary teaching ritual, his schoolmasters concluded—as often happens—that he was inferior. The fact that the boy leaped into activities that interested him, but that lay outside the academic bounds, was serenely overlooked.

After his secondary schooling had come to a close, the lad went to the university to study theology. He entered Halle and then went to [100]



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Jena, where he studied under that famous triumvirate, Eucken, Rein, and Liebman. And here his field of actual interest spread far beyond the boundaries of theology. He gave considerable attention to history, German, philosophy, and education. Later, after getting his doctorate, he undertook several tours through the Vaterland, on these trips often visiting the schools. Finally, he migrated to England, where through the recommendations of his former professor, Dr. Rein, the famous Herbartian, he became connected with Cecil Reddie's school at Abbotsholme. This school was the prototype of all new schools and forever left its progressive mark on Lietz, although distinctly the *Landerziehungsheime* are not simply imitations of Abbotsholme. With respect to the influences of the Abbotsholme, this writer believes that the country-home schools would have been born regardless of Lietz's English experiences. Lietz once said,

Neither in England nor elsewhere did I have to seek a model to imitate. What I created later on grew out of the bitter sorrow which my own school caused me; out of the joy and enthusiasm which my home town, vacation, family, and university studies supplied; and above all, my interest in and devotion to youth and people.

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In these few lines one will probably find the keynote of the Lietzian pedagogy. Lietz's disappointing experience at Greifswald led him to damn the city as an educational milieu. His life on the paternal farm, with its wide and untrammelled freedom, led him to canonize the countryside as an educative force; and his dismal days of drill in the intellectual barracks of Greifswald made him a persistent foe of an education which put its main stress on the assimilation of fruitless facts. Putting these ideas together, Lietz visioned a school set in the country; a school of affection and understanding, alive to the interests and needs of a nascent individuality.

Lietz was not a great or original thinker. Nor did he shine as an educational theorist. Indeed, up to his thirtieth birthday his vocational interests hovered uncertainly between those of cleric and farmer. That he eventually turned to schoolmastering for a livelihood was mainly an accident. Even after he had been busying himself for some time with the secrets of pedagogy, he was once at the point of relinquishing teaching for the cloth. And yet if born teachers actually exist in the flesh, Lietz *par excellence* belonged among them. Like all great teachers, he was gifted with a dynamic

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personality. Peasants and professors were among his friends, laborers and men of wealth among his admirers; even governmental bureaucrats were amicably disposed toward him. For he was an indefatigable worker in surmounting obstacles. Twice his school burned down, and on three occasions internal bickerings endangered it. But he willingly met his adversities and saw them through. During the late war, although then past forty-five, he volunteered for service at the front, and even after his breakdown—followed by a severe attack of pernicious anemia—he continued to serve the school. Borne here and there on a stretcher, he continued to teach, sometimes having himself carried into the fields and woods to watch and direct the work of his young protégés. But the end could not be circumvented; in June, 1919, death came.

Essentially the *Landerziehungsheime* stress the social and the non-academic features of education: their goal for the student is a well-balanced personality, which according to the ideals of Lietz flourishes best in the soil of native folkways. Hence the Lietzian schools represent a protest against the overindustrialization of the land and the time. Moreover, the L.E.H. have flung down

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the gantlet to the rigid and conservative intellectualism which had impressed itself so heavily on the secondary schools. "We are striving to develop," says Dr. Andreessen, the present head of the Lietzian schools, "not the one who knows, but the independent seeker and doer." The *Landerziehungsheime* take vast pride in being a world for youth. Conventional academic restrictions have for the most part been tossed aside; the burden of cultural tradition has been removed: not that the country home schools put no value on the cultural heritage, but that this heritage must be more than an avenue to erudition. The Lietzian schools are eager to have their pupils close to nature, separate from the artificiality of the city. The simple life of the peasant at its best, his industry and thrift, are absorbed and shared by the pupils in their own life and labor.

When the founders created the Lietzian schools, they gave considerable attention to what the scientists have called the geopsychic factor in education—that is, the effect of the geographic environs on the development of the child's nature. The site of each school was chosen with particular respect to the age of the pupils who were to come there. The school for the youngest pupils, for

example, is housed on a modest country estate in a typical German village, far from the turbulent city. Here no automobiles dash through the streets; no crowds throng the pavement; and there are no mills and disheartening slums, or ugly billboards. In their stead are pleasing red roofs, multi-colored cottages, and grassy meadows; a canal idling through the town with cruising flocks of ducks and geese; a few ox carts rumbling over the cobblestoned streets; a church bell tolling the hour.

This is the textbook from which the young Lietzians gather their learning. The school is their laboratory. A diminutive replica of the village, it has its own barns and sheds and toolhouse. The same stream that slides through the village passes behind the house in which the youngsters live; and on the other side are the gardens, in which each child tends his own small patch. When school is over, the children go to work in the fields. Interestingly enough, they share much of the community life about them, even celebrating the same festivals that lend gayety to the peasant life. Such are the impressions life in the school makes on the growing child fortunate enough to spend three or four years in its midst! These youngsters are indeed "rooted in the native soil."

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In the *Landerziehungsheime* the pupils rise at cock-crow. Dressing lightly and quickly, they dash off for their morning run. With a teacher at their side, they trot over the countryside, stirring their blood and breathing deeply. And a dip under the shower gives the whole performance just the right *coup de grace*. Rousseau would be elated could he cast his eyes on the comfortable raiment worn by these lads, for sandals, short trousers, bare knees, and soft open collars are the sartorial rule. When working in the fields the boys usually strip to the waist, so that they may absorb the sun's health-giving rays.

After the early exercises, which ordinarily last about fifteen minutes, the first breakfast is served. This consists of porridge and, as might be expected, is dispatched promptly. At six-thirty the first class begins. Forty-five minutes later the bell sounds for the second breakfast, composed of porridge, bread, and cocoa. Then there is another class, and three forty-five-minute periods until ten-fifteen. Now comes a pause from classwork, and during the interlude the pupils consume a light mid-morning lunch. Then they tackle the job of straightening up their rooms. Whatever time is left is consecrated to free play. A double period

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of classwork then follows. And finally comes the serving of a substantial midday dinner.

After the meal there is an hour of rest. But at two o'clock the boys emerge for their afternoon work, this being primarily practical work about the house, in the workshops, or in the fields. Led by its master, one squadron concentrates on potato-hoeing; another will arm itself with rakes and proceed to the conquest of the hayfield. In the larger schools the groups are usually divided, half being set to work and half being made to participate in sports. The smaller boys usually are not expected to do much practical work, and are allowed to invade the woods, where according to their choice they become Indians, cowboys, or robbers. Here they dig caves, put up tents, and build houses. Some of the afternoon is usually given to music also. Every Lietzian school, in fact, has its orchestra, its quartets and trios.

When the clock strikes four the youngsters, having once more accumulated an appetite, are feasted with bread and cocoa. Up to five o'clock the program continues with physical activities—mainly athletics and games. At five, however, the children are summoned indoors for study, and two hours later the dining room

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is once more occupied, this time for a very light supper.

After supper the whole school gathers for an evening get-together. Weather permitting, the meeting is held in some sheltered clearing in the woods, and here boys and teachers, wrapped in their blankets, rest while the head of the school reads aloud. Later on there is singing and music. If the weather is bad, the school usually assembles informally in one of the pleasant drawing-rooms—where, if a boy feels so inclined, he may squat on the floor. It is truly a *freier Abend*, which takes on the air of a huge and congenial family conclave. The only formal touch comes at the end, when each pupil bids a personal goodnight to the head of the school. But this after all is a common German custom, and is enacted every evening in thousands of homes throughout Germany.

Each *Landerziehungsheim*, as has been suggested, is restricted to pupils of a certain age. There is one school for children between the ages of nine and twelve, three schools for the intermediate groups between twelve and sixteen, and two schools for pupils between the ages of sixteen and eighteen. The youngest children go to school at Gebesee, which has the first three classes of the secondary

schools, up to the *quarta*.¹ At Bieberstein, which is for the older pupils, one will find the upper classes of the German secondary school.

The segregation according to age is, of course, deliberate. As has already been explained, the motive is geopsychical. Furthermore, those in charge of the country-home schools feel that individual self-development is not best encouraged in a boarding school that houses pupils of all ages. The Lietzian educators would like to have each of their charges develop his own individual talents and powers to the full; but such development, it seems, is often impeded by the human tendency to imitate. Younger pupils in particular like to ape not only the doings and organizations of their older comrades, but also their more striking mannerisms. Older pupils at times tend to overstimulate their younger colleagues; and the latter, on the other hand, often hamper their older associates. Obviously, to house adolescents and pre-adolescents together is a task that is fraught with difficulties. The greatest value of segregation as practiced in the L. E. H., and as reported by Dr. Andreesen, is that "in every home a class of boy

¹ The *quarta* represents the third year of the German secondary school.

leaders is formed, who develop a feeling of responsibility for their home and comrades, but who in their new home will once more have to win their spurs."

The Lietzian schools do not foster coeducation. At the outset only boys were admitted to the *Landerziehungsheime*. Just before its passing, Ilseburg was admitting capable girls, but in Bieberstein girls are seldom admitted. In the main the Lietzian schools are boys' schools, and are so considered. Similar schools for girls, however, have sprung into being, although these are not in the Lietzian chain.

In the L. E. H. student government has fertile soil in which to thrive. However, no fetish is made of governmental forms and machinery as is done in some progressive schools. Home life is the basis of student government in the country-home schools. As a member of the group every pupil has a right to be heard on matters relating to the school and its life. The community life always offers vast and varied opportunities in self-discipline and responsibility.

Lietz, it will be recalled, objected to the heavy intellectualism of the traditional secondary school. Interested in life in its majestic aspects, the father

of the *Landerziehungsheim* sought to educate the whole boy, not merely a part of him. The program of the country-home school aims to develop well-balanced children. The boy not only has intellectual experiences, but also takes an active part in social life, in sports and labor, in crafts and arts. Music, for example, is held in high esteem, and musical instruction is aimed at more than a mastery of technique; it seeks to lift music to a high plane of emotional experience. The capacities for musical appreciation differ widely, but for the boys music has become as vital to life as their lungs.

In the Lietzian schools labor has been raised to the same sphere as study; moreover, it has real social and economic value. In some schools a form of the familiar guild system has been installed. Under this scheme, which is a purely voluntary undertaking on the part of the pupils, students may apprentice themselves to a master craftsman, who is usually one of the school's teachers but sometimes may be a workman on the place. Now and then even the master may be an ambitious student; obviously, then, he must be mature and experienced enough to be able to impart first-rate instruction in the secrets of his particular craft.

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Some of these student guilds have turned out work of the first calibre. They have erected sheds; wired, repaired, and painted buildings; laid out athletic grounds, cultivated gardens, and made excavations for swimming pools.

As might be expected, the teacher in the L. E. H. plays a significant part in his school's vast educational program. Unlike his colleagues of the public school, the country-home school maestro may not limit his duties to the classrooms. He is expected to be more than an official—more, indeed, than a routine teacher. Mere schoolmasters are not wanted in the Lietzian schools. The country-home school teacher must have that rare capacity of being able to reduce to a vanishing point the usual chasm that separates teacher and pupil. He is not sentimentally expected to become a bosom friend of his pupils, yet as Dr. Andreesen says, "Every teacher should be capable of deep friendship. . . . And he should have a heart." In a word, like all teachers worthy of their robes, the Lietzian teacher is expected to understand and sympathize with the tumultuous life of every growing boy. And, of course, like the boys he is expected to educate, the Lietzian teacher must be many-sided. He too must be more than one

who knows; he must also be a doer. He must be ready at all times to set an example not only in his own specialty but in other spheres of life as well.

The Lietzian teachers must meet the same standards of training as their colleagues in the state secondary schools. Unlike the latter, however, the country-home school teachers are not state employes, and therefore are not entitled to the usual retirement pension. Their tenure, too, is not so secure. As a result of all these factors, the Lietzian schools on the whole draw teachers who are wholehearted devotees of progressive education, and in the main, capable and civilized men of the finest sort.

The fact that the L. E. H. are private ventures of a strongly experimental sort has led many to believe, quite erroneously, that the ordinary routine of instruction is not of a high order. Actually, though perhaps somewhat reluctantly, the country-home schools follow the regular course of studies now in good standing in the modern types of secondary schools, namely, the *Ober-realschule*, *Deutsche Oberschule*, or the *Reformreal-gymnasium*. Bound as they are to the state's requirements, the country-home schools have not

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been able to make many curricular changes. The best they have been able to do is to make the curriculum as flexible as possible, and to include as many extracurricular doings as possible. But on the whole, despite the watchful and potent arm of the state, the country-home schools have been able to keep formalism and intellectualism from within their gates; marks and examinations have been driven into the background. Indeed, it is not until the student reaches the school for the advanced group that examinations take on importance—as when the boys are preparing for their last examination. The latter is the well-known *Reifeprüfung*, a state test which is the Open Sesame to the university.

During his last year, in preparation for his tilt with the examiners, the student does considerable intellectual jousting. Every fortnight he is given a “study day” which he uses for the preparation of a class paper or a senior theme, or for intensive reading or reference work. The senior essay, incidentally, is often of high intellectual merit, comparable in some instances to the better sort of master’s thesis in the United States. The subjects of such essays vary from *The Anatomy of the Earthworm* to *the Cloister of Fulda* and

Its Chapels. These *Jahresarbeiten*, as they are called, play a weighty part in the "leaving" examination in the official evaluation of the student's qualifications for university work. However, graduates of the L. E. H. who yearn for the higher learning have seldom had difficulty in gaining access to it. Many of the country-home school pupils, of course, have no wish to enter the university, this being particularly true of those who are not planning to enter one of the major professions.

Like many other experimental schools, the *Landerziehungsheime* have aroused a good deal of attention and discussion. The critics, as usual, stand divided in their opinions of the actual contribution and influence of the schools. Undoubtedly, however, a number of the main ideals and practices of the Lietzian schools have filtered into the public schools, and especially into the post-war reformed German school. The ideas of learning by doing, of fitting education to the needs of children, of a balanced education which educates the whole child rather than merely his mind; the stress on health, games, hikes, and greater classroom informality—these and many other Lietzian principles are all hallmarks of [116]

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modern public education in Germany at its best. Nor has the influence of the L. E. H. been limited only to Germany. In several respects even the Austrian Educational Institutes, which were organized after the war, are closely modeled on the pattern of the *Landerziehungsheime*.

CHAPTER VIII

WYNEKEN AND WICKERSDORF

ASSOCIATED with Hermann Lietz in his pioneer work were two educators who subsequently were to reap fame in their own right: Paul Geheeb and Gustav Wyneken. For a time the latter was director of the first Lietzian school at Ilsenburg, and subsequently he became a teacher at Haubinda. When Lietz left for Bieberstein to launch his third school, he put Geheeb in charge of Haubinda. However, in 1906, since all was by no means quiet there, and the difficulties and bickerings with the founder of the *Landerziehungsheime* seemed endless, Wyneken and Geheeb withdrew from the Lietzian movement to establish their own school at Wickersdorf in Thuringia. Later they separated: Geheeb left to establish his Odenwald school, while Wyneken remained to experiment in his own way at Wickersdorf. There Wyneken and his work were due to encounter many a storm. Indeed, in 1910 he actually was forced to relinquish his position at the

school. Although nine years later he was recalled, after a year and a half trouble once more appeared, and again he was forced out.

The schools established by Wyneken and Geheeb are known as the *Freie Schulgemeinden* (the "F. S. G."), or the "free school communities." With the financial help of several well-to-do parents, Wyneken and his partner acquired a run-down estate, with a dilapidated mansion, a house for the workers, several stables, and a barn. After a year the barn had been transformed into a combined schoolhouse and dormitory for the older boys. The stables were converted into kitchen and dining room, and the barn became the students' sleeping quarters. From these primitive beginnings the school eventually was to grow into some ten buildings with more than a hundred rooms, including dormitories, workshops, schools, and other departments.

The free school communities have much in common with the Lietzian country-home schools from which they sprang. Both are located in beautiful rural environs, stress a well-balanced form of education with a liberal variety of activities, and emphasize the development of socially useful personalities. Both stress health and physical

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well-being, have introduced reforms in dress and diet and banned alcohol and tobacco, and exalt the spiritual and esthetic sides of education. And both, of course, are singularly free from social conventions. However, some fundamental differences exist between the two types of schools. The Lietzian homes are relatively much more conservative, in politics and religion leaning to the right wing. The free school communities on the whole are much more liberal in these spheres, and at times they have even been accused of being too radical. Moreover, from its beginning Wickersdorf has had coeducation; and in his Odenwaldschule, which is also a free school community, Dr. Geheeb has installed a form of coeducation which for its unstinted liberality is unique.

Two main postulates characterize Wyneken's pedagogical thinking. First, he demands that the school be a free community in fact as well as in name. The school is to be nobody's puppet; neither state nor church nor society may set itself up as the free school community's guardian or dictator. Curiously enough, Wyneken believes that the family often counteracts true education. It has forced, he says, "its

young members to ape the parents"—and the older generation, Wyneken believes, is too materialistic in its interests. "As long as society and the nations are under the yoke of an economic struggle for existence," he once wrote, "just so long . . . the enslavement of youth will continue." With the older generation's materialistic outlook, there can be no real understanding of the spiritual aspects of civilization.

This insistence on the non-interference of adults is closely interwoven with a second Wyneken doctrine. He himself has set it down as *Jugendkultur*, by which he means that youth is to fashion its own culture, to create its own world. There is to be no indoctrination. In its gropings and strivings youth is to be guided by sympathetic adults, but such guides, while they may be chronologically ancient, must feel within their human frame the spirit of youth; above all they must respect this spirit in their protégés. Wyneken once proclaimed,

Youth, hitherto only an appendage of the older generation, shunted out of public life, assigned a passive rôle in life . . . is beginning to think of itself. It seeks to shape its own life by itself in order to be free from the indolent habits of its elders and the

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dictates of an ugly convention. It seeks a new way of life which will correspond to its youthful being, but which at the same time will enable it to take itself and its creations seriously and help it to link itself as a distinct factor with the work of civilization.

The right education, Wyneken believes, is possible only in isolation: obviously, therefore, it cannot take place in the city. And true to his credo, Wyneken has put Wickersdorf in an isolated Thuringian valley. Towards the south stand the pine-clad Thuringian mountains, and to the north other mountains, more open and extended. The entire landscape is of a vast, somber velvet-green. Though the surrounding mountains rise high above it, Wickersdorf is located over 600 meters above the sea. Looking down from the heights, one's eye barely sees the school, so dominated is it by the immense pines on the hillsides. Near the school lie the gardens and meadows that supply the school's wants. Farther away, with its few scattered houses, is the village of Wickersdorf itself. But all these, together with the school and its houses, sheds, and barns, when set against the enormous stretches of Thuringian forest land, are singularly small. Far away behind the pines lie other fields and meadows and villages, and from

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the mountain heights on clear days they are plainly visible. Even more remote lies the nearest city, Saalfeld, which is the railway station proximate to the Wickersdorf domain. It is a good two hours' trip from the Wyneken school.

The daily doings of the Wickersdorf student are in essence not unlike those of the *Landerziehungsheim*. Out of bed at 6:30, the pupils start the day with a twenty-minute run; sometimes open-air gymnastics are substituted. These physical exercises, as might be expected, are adjusted to the ages and physique of the pupils; and the girls and boys are separated. After having its shower, at 7:30 the whole school assembles for a brief musical performance, which is followed by breakfast. Then ensue two periods of study separated by a five-minute intermission, following which comes a forty-five minute period of practical work—bed-making, room-cleaning, and so forth. A light morning lunch is now in order; with this out of the way, the students are ready for two more periods of instruction. Twice a week this last period is reserved for the school chorus; once a week it is made into a *Probestunde*, a sort of exhibition lesson, which is visited by all the teachers of the school and may also be observed by students of the

upper classes. At one o'clock the dinner bell sounds.

After dinner the pupils may do as they choose. At four o'clock comes cocoa. Twenty minutes suffice to dispatch this, and now the pupils are put to practical work, such as carpentry, bookbinding, modeling, metal work, laboratory work in chemistry or biology, field or garden work, drawing, gymnastics, music, and so on. From six o'clock to six-fifty all students are expected to participate in some form of athletics. At seven supper is served. Thursday afternoons are usually reserved for concentrated studying, particularly for the upper classes. Friday and Saturday afternoons are free time, which pupils may occupy according to their choice.

Between the more radical tenets of the Wyneken theory and the actual Wickersdorf practice there is a gap. In many ways, however, the school actually approaches the ideals of its founder. Every activity, it almost seems, is charged with spiritual value, whether it be simply the sitting down to a meal in the dining hall or the reading of poetic strophes before the repast. Youth here really seems to move in a world of youth, not in a world of men. What strikes one particularly

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is the vigor and confidence of these youngsters: their school work they tackle with the same zest and spirit they usually give to their games and sports. Music and art, nature and labor, play vast and significant rôles in the daily life of Wickersdorf.

A high place is held by dramatics. Every quarter year there is at least one major production—usually a Shakespearean comedy, but now and then an original play. In former days other authors of repute were also put on the boards, Molière, Rostand, Kleist, Grillparzer, Hans Sachs, Ludwig Thoma, and several other distinguished brewers of first-rate comedy being played. Only comedies were produced, for tragedy, it was felt, might strike a forced and false note in this world of youth. What probably helped more than anything else to push dramatics at Wickersdorf is the fact that the gifted Luserke was at the helm. A dramatist himself, Luserke is likewise a civilized teacher, thoroughly cognizant of the high art of inspiring his pupils. A few years ago Luserke left Wickersdorf to launch his own free school community, the celebrated *Schule am Meer*, which is located on a sandy North Sea islet just opposite Bremerhaven.

The stage used for the Wickersdorf performances is in the erstwhile barn, which has done its noble bit for the school by serving once as a dormitory and then as a gymnasium. The drawing power of these dramatic displays is great—so great, indeed, that despite the fact that some ambitious youths climb to the very rafters of the roof for a place to sit, for many less spirited individuals there is often standing room only. The Wickersdorf thespians make no attempt to be Hampdens or Barrymores; they have no yearning to copy the adult theater; nor are they striving to recreate works of art. When they plunge into their dramatic doings, all they want is to express themselves; their efforts are purely their own. At bottom, however, a Wickersdorf production takes in the whole school. Every production has a grand and festive air. As performances go, moreover, those of the Wickersdorf players have ranked high. They are famous throughout Germany for their splendid Shakespearean performances.

If Wickersdorf was touched by good fortune in having the capable Luserke at the helm in dramatics, it was just as lucky when it engaged the services of August Halm as music teacher. Though Halm died in 1929, he has no doubt left a

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permanent mark on Wickersdorf. He was a gifted composer of the first rank, and reaped fame as a pianist as well as a master of several other stringed instruments; but while he was at Wickersdorf, Halm was much more than a talented artist—he was also an inspiring leader and teacher, and his influence on the students was strong. His activities were always quite diverse. He gave individual lessons in violin- and piano-playing, directed string quartets, and conducted orchestras and choruses; in all of which his aim was not to develop experts, but to add a medium of expression to the child's existing repertoire. Yet Halm not only succeeded in organizing the musical possibilities of the school; he was actually able to cultivate a high musical taste among many of the growing Wickersdorfer pupils. Ever since Halm's connection with the school, the institution has nearly always had a first-rate string quartet that plays with beauty and understanding the works of such eminent musicians as Mozart, Beethoven, and Haydn—and, now and then, compositions of Halm himself. At times the school also boasts an orchestra, though since Wickersdorf rarely enrolls more than a relatively small number of pupils, the matter of recruiting adequate talent is not always

easy. Today musical instruction at Wickersdorf is partly individual. It includes piano, the other stringed instruments, and the wind instruments. Every pupil is required to take some theoretical instruction and must participate in a practical way in some form of group music, such as the chorus, orchestra, trio, or quartet. At least once a week the whole school assembles for a musical performance; every morning is begun with a Bach prelude or fugue. Without a doubt, music and its cult are among the finer aspects of the Wickersdorfer life.

When Wyneken and Geheeb seceded from the *Landerziehungsheim* movement, they drew with them a number of their students; and these have played a prominent part in the development and growth of Wickersdorf. Looked upon by their teachers as young friends with a hearty interest in their school's welfare, they were given a generous share in shaping its policies. As far as possible all matters relating to the school and its life and policies were discussed with the students. Such palavers had been staged occasionally in the country-home schools, but in reality they were without official sanction, and as far as action was concerned they usually meant precisely nothing.

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At Wickersdorf, however, from almost the very start of the school's career such assemblies were stamped with official approval. In these gatherings all matters are settled by vote, and whatever the body decides counts. Pupils as well as teachers have the right to discuss and to vote. The gathering has been baptized the *Schulgemeinde*—the “school community”; from which free and sovereign body Wickersdorf took its name of *Freie Schulgemeinde*, or, as has been said, free school community.

The school communities usually meet in the evening, although need, not routine, determines the meeting. Usually there are some three or four convenings every quarter year, and each lasts about two hours. Though minutes are recorded and filed, there has never been any attempt to compile and systematize the various enactments that have come into being in the course of the years. Such a codification, it was always feared, would lead to petrification. These communities are not playing at self-government: here self-government is a social-pedagogical undertaking of the very first order; the machinery is simple and efficient. In general, business is dispatched in parliamentary style.

What sorts of matters are discussed and decided in these school communities? Actually, the subjects may deal with virtually anything. Not every matter brought into the discussion has to be voted upon; very often a discussion exists for its own sake. But the most important and vital discussions obviously are those which deal with the actual life of the school, and in these all sorts of problems are considered. There is, for example, the matter of luxury and its relation to the school. In dealing with this matter the community decided, among other things, that in traveling to and from Wickersdorf for their vacations students were to ride no better than third or fourth class in the trains; that no one, just simply because he had money or craved comfort, was to ride to the railway station, which, as has been said, was some two hours away. The matter of pocket money was regulated. Betting was prohibited. The receipt of presents of food, and of sweets in particular, was put under the ban. It was the *Schulgemeinde* that decided to clamp down the lid on drinks and smokes. And a few years ago the school community tackled the question as to how long the recitation period should be: the faculty wanted a forty-five-minute period, and the pupils, curiously [132]

enough, held out for a full sixty-minute period; and when the matter was finally put to a vote, the school adopted the sixty-minute period. Once a decision is made, it is binding on everybody. The decisions of the community, however, can be overruled by the school's director—and this obviously seems reasonable, since he is the one who is responsible to parents and the authorities for the conduct and the administration of the school.

Before a student is awarded the privilege of voting in the school community, he must have been in attendance at Wickersdorf for at least six months. The younger children are also allowed to take part in these meetings, but their vote, for obvious reasons, is somewhat restricted.

During all the years of its operation the school community has never sunk to a puerile or trivial level: it has busied itself with questions that, for the moment at least, were thoroughly significant. Wyneken says:

The school community is no cultural organization, no supplementary instruction, but an organ of self-development of the community life. Nothing in it is taken up for the sake of any theoretical interest; everything aims at the practice of community life.

. . . the school community is meant honestly; no fraud lurks behind it; it aims to be nothing more than the natural self-government of the community.

Another Wickersdorf social creation of more than passing interest is the so-called *Kameradschaft*, or comradeship. Actually this came into being in the country-home school, where contrary to the more conservative wishes of Lietz, Wyneken introduced it. Under the Wickersdorf scheme of comradeships every pupil is expected to join a group which centers in a particular teacher, and the choice must be made no later than two weeks after the pupil's entrance into Wickersdorf. His choice of a comradeship is entirely his own, except when he simply can't make up his mind. Before being admitted to membership in a comrade group, a pupil's application must be passed upon by the group; only if deemed satisfactory by the group, does the applicant finally become a member. Should he subsequently change his mind and want to join another comradeship, he may do so in two ways: Twice a year at a stated time there is an opportunity for such pupils to change to another group, and at such a time the pupil is required only to go through the regular procedure of having his application approved by the group he wishes to

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join. At any other time, if he wants to change, he must get the special sanction of his own group, his proposed group, and his teacher—which, of course, is not always easy.

The main duties of a comradeship leader or, as the Wickersdorfers call him, the *Kameradschaftsführer*, are to guide and stimulate his youthful disciples. He watches over them, like a good father, perhaps, and gives advice and help in every possible respect. The comradeships sit together during meals, and once a week they hold a *Kameradschaftsabend*, an evening of play and recreation for which the group assembles in the room of its leader. These comradeships, it should be noted, are not designed as a pedagogic supplement to the family; they are in no sense fraternities, set up in the holy name of good fellowship: whatever value dwells in them is quite intangible. A great deal, if not all, depends on the leader's personality. Given a civilized leader, of good personality, a comradeship ought to yield hosts of benefits. Rules and regulations will not help here any more than acts of Congress to abolish rain.

The most significant aspect of the comradeship system, no doubt, is the pupil's freedom of choice. With this and plenty of sound sense it is quite

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possible for him to find the group which best suits his needs. Not all comradeships, it may be noted, are of equal standing. Some of them, clustered



WICKERSDORF ON A HIKE

around teachers who have been associated with the school for many years, are quite old and boast of proud and lofty traditions; they are rather permanent, and enjoy popular veneration.

Wickersdorf is organized on the basis of the *Oberrealschule*. This, as is well known, is one of the regular nine-year secondary schools stressing work in modern languages, mathematics, and the

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sciences. Students of Wickersdorf who want to study Latin receive special private instruction. At the close of his schooling, the Wickersdorfer is of course expected to pass the regular state maturity examination, and this state requirement forces the school authorities to follow somewhat the curricula of the more conventional schools. Interestingly enough, this official requirement is not looked upon as a serious obstacle to the realization of Wickersdorf's progressive educational ideals. After all, there still remains a great deal of freedom in the actual choice of subject matter and in its treatment and presentation. And here, no doubt, the spirit is entirely that of the new school. Since 1924 Wickersdorf has had the right to conduct the maturity examination under its own teachers in the presence of a state supervisor.¹

¹ Under a ruling of the National Socialist régime, a few minor changes were made in the organization and administration of Wickersdorf. In spirit, however, the school remains unchanged.

CHAPTER IX

THE ODENWALD SCHOOL

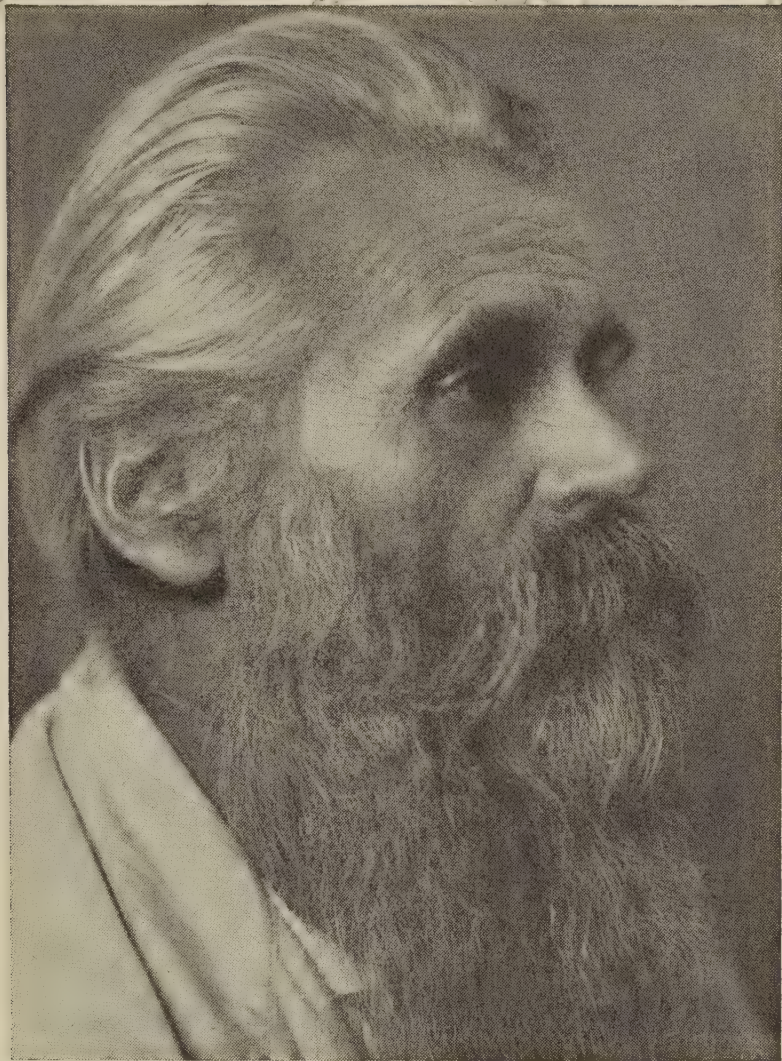
PROBABLY the best known of the modern German free school communities is the Odenwaldschule, founded in 1910 by Dr. Paul Geheeb. Together with Wyneken, Geheeb had previously been connected with the Lietzian movement, and it was after his withdrawal from Wickersdorf that he made his venture. As might be expected, there are some striking similarities between the two school communities. Like Wickersdorf, Odenwald lies in a romantic and picturesque part of Germany, in the Rhine valley south of Worms, in a place known as Heppenheim. Odenwald is not so secluded from the outside world as Wickersdorf: it is able to keep in touch with such centers of civilization as Heidelberg, Darmstadt, and Mannheim. But again like Wickersdorf, Odenwald started life in a modest way, a small village inn being the nucleus of the school. Today it has seven main buildings, a machine house, and several outhouses—the main houses, interestingly enough,

have been named after such celebrities as Goethe, Herder, Fichte, Schiller, von Humboldt, Pestalozzi, and Plato. All these buildings have been designed with an eye not alone to beauty, but also to health and hygiene. They are in an alluring setting of forests, gardens, and meadows.

The living spirit of Odenwald is its founder. Born in 1870 in the Thuringian hamlet of Geisa, Geheeb was the son of a noted botanist. Like Lietz, Geheeb was brought up close to nature, and the result was that even as a child he took a keen interest in the local flora and fauna, and that before he was well into his 'teens he seemed to be following in the footsteps of his botanical father. Fate, however, had something else in store for the boy. It deprived him of his mother when he was barely fourteen years old, and represented the most devastating shock of his whole life. But it served to kindle him spiritually: hitherto interested exclusively in the natural sciences, Geheeb now turned to religion and philosophy. Like Pestalozzi he became filled with an eager desire to help his fellow man; and, again like the great Swiss educator, he made up his mind to become a cleric. The next few years he gave to his theological studies. But his interests were never circum-

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Wishes. nothing by means of which
What can we do in life. The only way
from the end of the world.



PAUL GEHEE

scribed by the academic requirements set down for aspiring theologians; instead, they traveled in a very broad lane which included not only oriental languages but also the natural sciences, and even medicine.

Geheeb's studies took him to Berlin and Jena, and it was at the latter harbor of the intellect that he met Lietz. The two men had much in common and soon became close friends. Through the influence of Lietz, Geheeb became more and more convinced that the best way to help mankind was not as a preacher in the pulpit but rather as an educator of youth: both men at heart were educational reformers, their inspiration lying in the philosophy of Fichte and Goethe. Hence, four years after Lietz had established his first school, Geheeb joined him at Haubinda.¹ Four years later Geheeb joined Wyneken in launching Wickersdorf. Finally, in 1910, Geheeb established his own school at Odenwald.

Some one hundred and fifty pupils between the ages of three and twenty are enrolled in the school, and about one-third of these are girls. As might be expected, the vast majority of the children are German, though about one-fifth come from other

¹ Cf. p. 99.

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lands. Up to very recently the school was organized in families—that is, in groups of from six to ten under the care of a teacher or a married couple—and the family usually occupied one story of a house. The older pupils generally had their own private room; but among the younger children a room was shared by two or three. Each house was occupied by some twenty-five to thirty boys and girls; the Goethe house, which is divided into two sections, accommodates sixty. Under this—the family system—every new registrant at Odenwald was tentatively assigned to a family; and after some time, usually six weeks, he was allowed to select for himself the particular family with which he wanted to be associated more permanently. Unlike the custom in the *Landerziehungsheime*, there was no segregation according to age at Odenwald: at bottom there was an attempt here to make the group as nearly as possible like a genuine family.

For twenty-one years this system functioned. But at Easter, 1931, a significant and fundamental change was made. On that date the family system which had so long characterized Odenwald expired—except in the Pestalozzi house, the abode of the very young children. In the other houses another system was introduced. The Plato house, which

is the smallest of the Odenwald houses, has since been reserved exclusively for adults, and the other five houses are for the pupils—although, for the reason that accommodations in the Plato house are inadequate, several adults also reside in these houses. An attempt is to be made to distribute the children who are to occupy the houses so that there will be a scattering of ages in every house. In every house inhabited by the pupils one of their number is to be made responsible for the order and cleanliness of the place, his domain extending over the entire house and including corridors and stairways, rooms and closets, and so on. Another youngster assumes responsibility in matters concerning health and hygiene: obviously he is not to perform on the grand scale of a medico, but his duties are important enough, for if there is an accident he sees to it that proper first-aid is administered, and if someone is ill he reports the matter to the nurse. Another student position in the house is that of bursar, this student having charge of money matters. A fourth office is held by a student whose duties are to help his fellows with their studies. The fifth, and final, officer concerns himself with the matter of leaves: anyone desiring to leave the school, whether it be for a few hours or

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for several days, must have this officer's approval. Obviously these positions require the exercise of considerable common sense, and the students selected must be fairly mature. Girls, having the same rights as boys at Odenwald, are also eligible for house offices. Certainly the Odenwald pupils have taken eagerly to the new order. Under the new plan the houses are, of course, run by the students themselves. Once a week all the house chieftains—thirty strong in number—gather in conclave to discuss their common problems, and to this meeting they usually invite the head of the school.

Coeducation is very real at Odenwald. Actually it is much more than coinstruction: it is a genuine living together of a very high and noble order. Probably not more than a half dozen schools throughout the world can match the Odenwald achievement in coeducation. Wickersdorf, though a devotee of coeducation, has not climbed to the heights reached by Odenwald; for in the Wyneken school the two sexes are much more segregated. Many of those who are familiar with Wickersdorf have declared that the school is actually dominated by the boys—assuredly not the situation at Odenwald.

Like Wickersdorf, Odenwald is blessed with a genuine system of self-government. Here, too, there is a *Schulgemeinde* whose potency and influence are immense. The school council is composed of pupils and faculty. Unlike Wickersdorf, however, the Geheeb school sets up no limitations in the matter of rights and privileges. Everyone here is treated alike; teachers have no dominating influence, either direct or otherwise. Every member of the *Schulgemeinde*—young as well as old—has a right to vote. And the council is actually the governing force of Odenwald. It is a sovereign body; its decrees and regulations are final; no one, not even the head of the school, may set them aside. That Dr. Geheeb, who after all is really responsible to the outside world for the doings of his academy, is willing to abide by the decisions of his pupils is eloquent testimony that his vast faith in youth is more than mere rhetoric.

The sessions of the school council are strictly private and are not open to visitors. Teachers and pupils of Odenwald, however, have assured the rest of the world that the *Schulgemeinde* takes itself and its work very seriously. Certainly self-government is not regarded as a toy from which now and then there are incidental drippings of

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educational value. Nor is the council looked upon as a parliament, a miniature replica of adult governmental machinery in which parties represent the varying group interests. Every member, it appears, is working for the common good of Odenwald. And this, one ventures to say, is genuine school spirit, requiring no hornblowing on the part of the faculty to set it in motion. Its roots are nourished by tradition, a very puissant sort of tradition, which closely touches every pupil at Odenwald.

Practical schoolmasters probably will be inclined to shake their prudent heads. What sort of a school is this, they will ask, where even the principal submits to the dictates of his pupils? What is to prevent them from wielding their powers to the full? Some day, no doubt, this will happen; then you will see these youngsters conspiring against their pedagogues. They will begin by voting themselves a two months' vacation; then they will abolish all studying; and finally, if there is any more harm to be done, they will bestow their eager attention on that. Now all these doings are theoretically possible at Odenwald, but of course there is no likelihood of their occurrence. The youngest pupils may have the same

rights as their more mature comrades and adults, yet obviously they never wield the same influence. And, as in every social organization, there are always a few trusted and sensible leaders whom the masses are quite willing to follow. Though the Odenwald pupils really govern in every sense of the word, they usually are quite eager to seek the advice of their maturer elders.

Interestingly enough, the Odenwald school council also concerns itself with matters relating to discipline. The right to punish belongs exclusively to the *Schulgemeinde*, which in individual cases may delegate the office to others, though never to an adult or to the faculty. The severest punishment the student council can inflict is to deprive the delinquent of his right to vote. Debarment from the ballot is, of course, not permanent—this would be tantamount to suspension from the school, and would mean in essence that the pupil affected is not the kind wanted at Odenwald.

Just what students can do in disciplining is superbly brought out by the following case. The defendant was a girl who had been entrusted with a responsible position in her house, and was now accused of failing to perform her duties. For such neglect her accusers wanted her removed from

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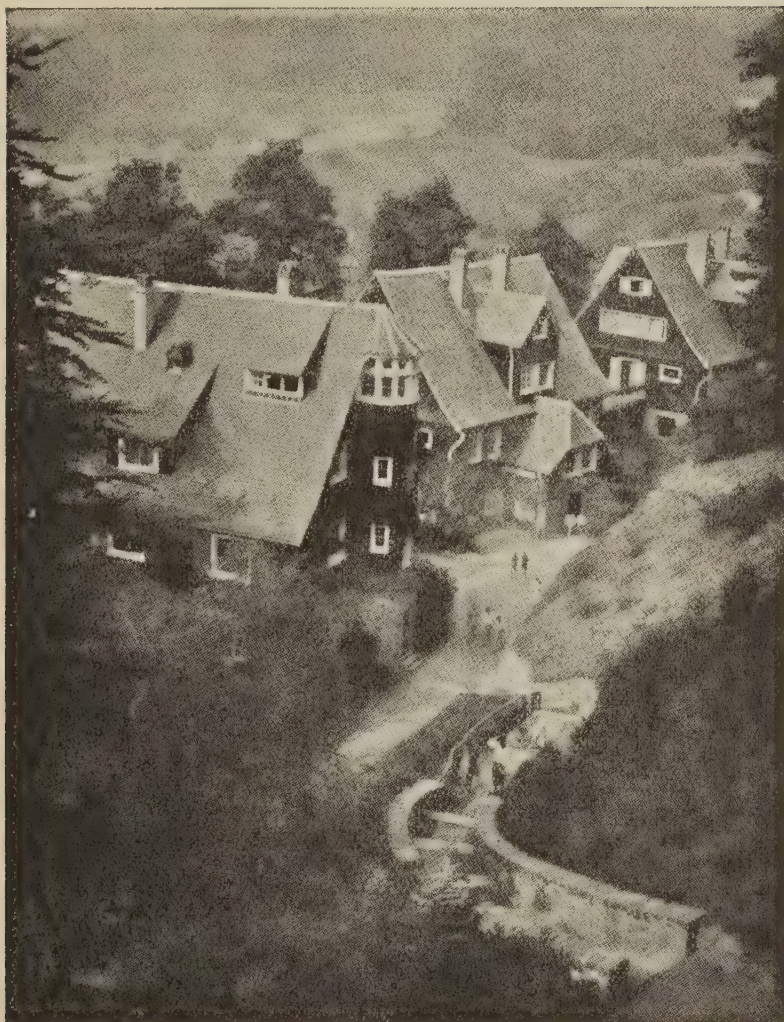
office. When confronted with the charges, the girl somewhat reluctantly admitted her failure to perform her duties; moreover, she conceded that her neglect of duty was deliberate. She had, it seems, tired of her office and wanted to get rid of it, and failure to do her work seemed to her the simplest way of accomplishing her aim. The girl's confession raised a storm of disapproval. True, she was a newcomer at Odenwald; obviously, she had not yet been infected by that high *esprit de corps* of which the school is so proud. But she had sinned against the group, and in no uncertain way. So it was unanimously decided that the group would have to get along without her membership until it could be sure that the girl had a better understanding of her responsibilities to Odenwald; and she was shorn of her right to vote. Her office, however, she was made to keep, and the proper performance of its duties was the main highroad she would have to traverse successfully in order to regain her good standing in the *Schulgemeinde*.

Instruction in the Odenwaldschule is organized in a way which in Germany, at least, is beyond compare. Instead of thrusting its students into a regular and inflexible program of studies for

a year, or even a term, Odenwald offers all subjects for children over ten years of age in courses of one month. Every student is expected to elect two content subjects. He has the right, however, to refuse to elect anything at all, and to concentrate instead on individual and independent work. Such cases occur when the student is advanced—they are a splendid example of how a student does not allow classwork to interfere with his studies! Courses to be given during the month are usually announced some time in advance, and the children have virtually a free hand in selecting their work, the only limitation being that they may not take courses for which they are obviously not fit. Thus, even in the most liberal house of learning, a child would certainly not be allowed to plunge into the advanced secrets of French syntax if he is not familiar with its simple fundamentals; usually moreover, a pupil is expected to discuss the matter of his course elections with his family adviser as well as his prospective teacher.

Besides taking two content courses, every Odenwalder is made to pursue one practical or craft course. And in this domain, too, the pupil is allowed to make his own choice. However,

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VIEW FROM THE PLATO HOUSE, SHOWING SOME OF THE OTHER HOUSES
THE BEDROOMS ARE ABOVE, AND THE CLASSROOMS BELOW

this four weeks' course system is not followed by the younger children in the elementary classes; here there is more emphasis on play. Gradually they make the transition from play to work, under a system of integrated instruction along the lines of Berthold Otto's *Gesamtunterricht*.² *linguistic*

At the end of every month is what is known as a *Kursschlusschulgemeinde*, at which the school council listens to the lectures and papers of students who have completed their four-week courses. At such a time there is an exhibit of some of the work turned in for the arts and crafts courses. All this, naturally, is not an examination—at least not in the time-honored inquisitorial sense. Though every pupil is expected to contribute, the precise nature of his contribution is left largely to his own judgment. However, the graduates of Odenwald, like all graduates of the secondary schools, take their regular maturity examinations. Since the spring of 1932 these examinations have been conducted by the Odenwald teachers themselves under the guidance of a state representative.

Even while instruction goes on, interestingly enough, discipline and its maintenance are exclu-

² Cf. p. 89 ff.

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sively in the hands of the pupils. At the start of every course a class will elect one from its midst to the office of Ordner, and in spirit with his title the Ordner is commissioned to keep order. Briefly, he concerns himself with discipline in all its intricate branches, from the job of seeing that instruction is not disturbed by any untoward and uncalled-for behavior, to that of enforcing punctuality in attendance. The Ordner is responsible on the one hand to the teacher who is conducting the course, and on the other to the school community. This system has obviously changed the rôle of the teacher. The latter's duties, for one thing, have become much simpler; more important, however, is the fact that he has been able to give up his policing—he is no longer forced by virtue of his office to be on the prowl for thoughtless miscreants who break the peace. But best of all, perhaps, is the fact that the teacher is now no longer held suspect by the pupils; he can actually approach them in a positive way. Under the Ordner scheme, teacher and pupil are no longer in the position of natural, nigh hereditary, opponents.

As in all progressive schools, the daily program of activities at Odenwald is carefully balanced.

Most of the morning is occupied by intellectual work. The first class begins at seven o'clock—before breakfast. The afternoon is given over to the crafts and outdoor work. And there are, of course, intermissions for victuals, practical work, recreation, and exercise. The many-sided development which Odenwald is striving to further is plainly in evidence in the reports the school dispatches to parents once or twice a year. These reports deal not merely with academic progress but with hosts of other matters—details concerning the youngster's height, weight, health, carriage, cleanliness, tidiness, punctuality, handwriting, speech, manners, deportment, individual interests, effort, and so on. Special information is available on the child's physical education, such items as gymnastics, hiking, skiing, and play being set down. The child's advance in the crafts and practical work is also disclosed. Likewise with the arts—plastic art, singing, and instrumental music are covered. And, as has been suggested, there is the usual report on the child's achievements in his various subjects.

A very beautiful and inspiring sight at Odenwald is the devotions, or *Andachten*. Spiritual in their essential purpose, these are gatherings of the entire

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school. Whenever possible they are convened in the open—on the athletic fields, in the woods, or on the hillside. The audience is contagiously informal: small groups are scattered everywhere, some sitting under trees and others squatting on the ground. Here and there an enterprising youngster, having learned the relationship of necessity and her child invention, has converted a deserted ant hill into a chair, crude yet satisfying. Thus the Odenwald populace sits and chats, awaiting the start of the exercises. Then gradually the sound of the children's voices ebbs, and music takes its place: the serenely buoyant notes of a violin, the deeper tones of the cello, or the melody of song. Often the group sits as if charmed by the wand of some fabulous Odenwald magician. Sometimes the whole program is dedicated to music; at other times only the beginning is musical, being followed by a recitation or a story. And here Geheeb himself has played a mighty part. Gifted as a storyteller, he has learned to master his audience. With his long beard and sparkling, kindly eyes, he is strangely impressive. One cannot help thinking of Tolstoy and his group of eager youngsters at Yasnaya Polyanna. There is in Geheeb that same rough yet majestic simplic-

ity, that same penetrating sincerity that seeks out the very souls of his hearers. All sorts of stories are narrated. They come from Lagerlöf, from Andersen, from Tolstoy. Fables and fairy tales are told. In the main they are of moral and spiritual value, but whatever they are, Geheeb knows how to tell them. "It is," one of his pupils once said, "as if he were telling a story of people whom he knows very well, his brothers perhaps, or people of his own kind. He understands them. To him they are true, and through him they become true and real to us."

At Odenwald drama and music are closely interwoven in the life of the children. The picturesque countryside is a first-rate setting for Shakespearean comedy. Other productions, too, are popular, such as Kleist's *The Broken Pitcher* and pieces which can be produced with simple materials and at the same time will tempt the actor's artistic expression. In music every child is encouraged to learn how to play the instrument best suited to him. In addition there are larger and smaller singing groups. One of the principal features of Odenwald's musical life, in fact, is its music evenings—*Musikabende*, which usually are devoted to such as Mozart, Beethoven, the two Bachs, [156]

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Haydn, Schubert, Händel, Brahms, and many others.

Like many other modern schools, Odenwald publishes a school paper. This is the *Waldkauz* and is named for the school's mascot, the owl: it appears bi-monthly and represents almost wholly a student undertaking. It is printed on the school's own presses, but contributions are not restricted to those of the students—they may come from the alumni, the faculty, and even from outsiders. The *Waldkauz* is strikingly different, in fact, from the usual American school paper. Simplicity is its keynote; it has no pictures, no cartoons, no stories. Instead, it features brief and well-written reports about the activities of Odenwald, its students, faculty, visitors, and now and then, its alumni. In the number I have before me (January–February, 1933) a dozen lines summarize the hockey season of 1932; two pages are given to the interesting subject of what the Odenwald students read; several pages are reserved for discussions of the school's various libraries. And in the same number there is an excellent article on "My Encounter with Humanism." What characterizes the *Waldkauz* above all is its maturity, which pervades the whole paper,

from the reports and articles to the very typography. When compared with the *Waldkauz*, the average American high-school papers, and even the majority of college journals, seem immature.

Several times during the school year, on the occasions of the birthdays of the great men for whom the student houses have been named, Odenwald celebrates on a grand scale. Preparations are undertaken by a committee which plunges into its work months before the arrival of the great event. On such a day the entire school treks into the hills, where something of the spirit of the great one who is being honored is caught. Talks are given. Portions are read from the works of the celebrity, and an open-air performance, with nature for a setting, is put on. Many of the children's parents, and also visitors from the near-by villages, participate. Sometimes, indeed, sports predominate: thus there was once a Schiller feast, which was quite devoid of any intellectual smack. It was dedicated to physical culture and featured competitive intramural athletics. There was, of course, no roaring ballyhoo, and the best prize that an athlete could win was not a bejeweled medal, but a plain little certificate which had been painted by the students in art work.

The Odenwald School

Odenwald seeks to be a place which turns out cultured, social human beings. With Wilhelm Meister it believes that what matters in education is that a man should be able to understand life clearly and live it well, in such a way that he cannot easily be imitated. Much of the school's success is no doubt due to its founder and director. Now past his sixtieth birthday, Geheeb has given the best part of his life to the realization of his high ideals. Affectionately known to his boys and girls as Paulus, he is the spirit which so distinguishes Odenwald.³

³ Under the National Socialist government some changes were made in the organization and administration of Odenwald. For one thing girls and boys may no longer live in the same dormitories; for another thing a new staff of teachers had to be hired. In the larger sense, however, Odenwald continues undaunted as a progressive school of the first magnitude.

CHAPTER X

BEDALES

ONE of the best known of the many English progressive schools is Bedales. The school was founded in 1893, and began with an enrolment of three boys; today it is coeducational and has a roster of over two hundred boys and girls. Its creator and present headmaster is J. H. Badley who, like Hermann Lietz, was once associated with Cecil Reddie in his pioneer venture at Abbots-holme. Though Bedales was launched as a purely personal undertaking, it has now been placed on a permanent foundation as the Bedales School Company.

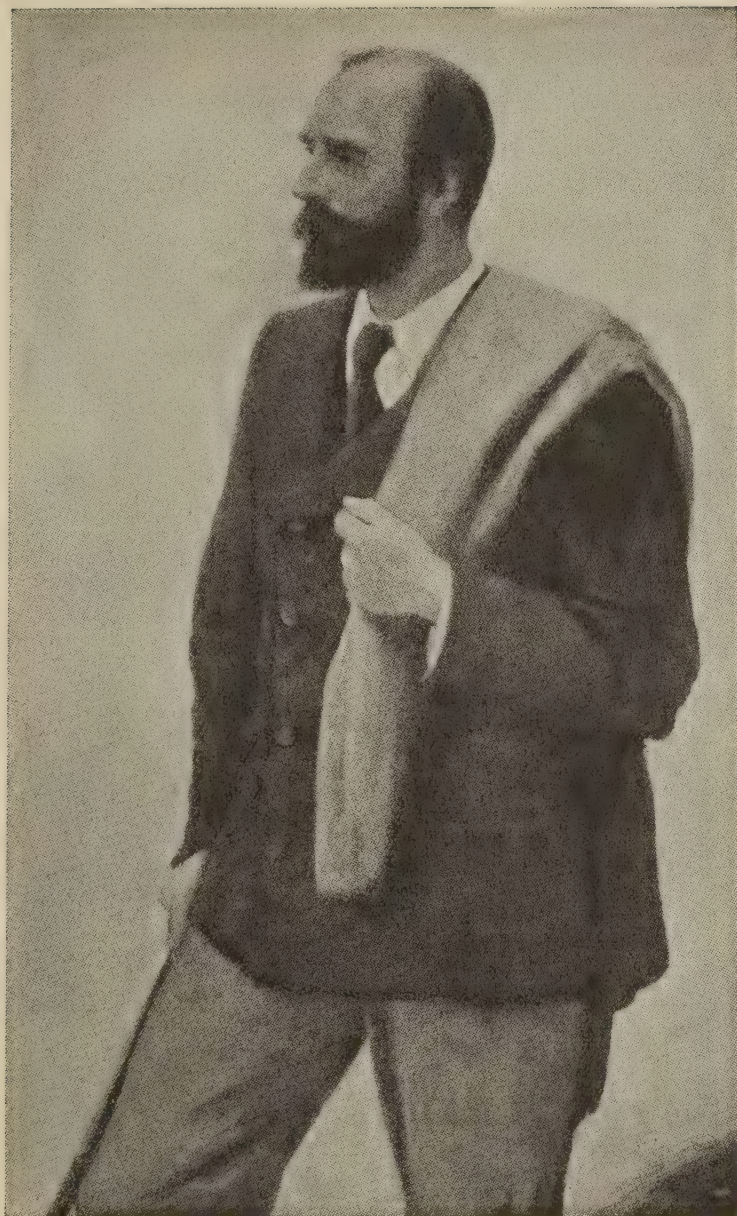
Like the country-home schools and the free school communities of Germany, Bedales is a country boarding school. Since 1900 it has been located at Petersfield. Here, on a hill some twelve miles from the sea, on a large and beautiful estate of some one hundred fifty acres, the school overlooks the Rother valley. It maintains a farm of

more than a hundred acres and grows its own fresh farm products, thus offering practical opportunities to those who are destined for a farming career. The gardens, orchards, and woods provide outdoor work for the children throughout the year; and for those boys and girls who want plots of their own, a special garden is reserved. Moreover, following the English public-school tradition, Bedales gives considerable attention to sports. On its immense grounds at least a dozen acres have been prepared for cricket, association football, lacrosse, and the like.

The boys and girls who go to Bedales vary in age from four to nineteen. The younger children, numbering about fifty and aged between four and twelve, occupy the Junior School. The older boys and girls, between the ages of eleven and nineteen, are housed in the Upper School, which accommodates one hundred sixty children.

The aims and methods of Bedales are of the regular progressive variety. The following is a summary of certain aims and principles which have guided the school's development since its foundation:

1. Freedom for normal and healthy development of body and mind, by the upbringing of girls and
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boys together in an atmosphere that fosters understanding and coöperation.

2. Care for the mental, moral, and physical needs of each child, without neglecting, of course, the needs of the community. According to the school's motto—"Work of each for the weal of all"—coöperation rather than competition is the foundation of action.

3. The creative urge is to have ample opportunity for expression.

4. Through the observance and treatment of matters of religion free from any trace of dogma, and acceptable by all regardless of creed, a sense of things of eternal value is developed.

5. International good-will is to be encouraged in every possible way.

6. Between pupil and teacher there should be a relationship of trust. Discipline is to come from self-control rather than from a superimposed authority.

Coeducation is one of the features of Bedales, and the reputation that the Petersfield school has won in this domain of education has spread throughout the world. For a European school, distinction in this particular phase of education is quite rare: in the matter of coeducation the only [164]

other European progressive school comparable to Bedales is Odenwald, at Heppenheim, Germany.¹ But coeducation at Bedales is more than coinstruction: it is the participation of boys and girls to the fullest possible extent in every phase of school life. The girls have their own dormitory, but they take their meals and do most of their work in the main building; they attend the same classes as the boys, and in the upper classes they have just as wide a range of electives as the boys. The girls participate in outdoor games, also: usually, because of the special nature of their games, they play separately, but occasionally they share their games with the boys. They also take part in carpentry and other handicrafts.

In all this the Bedalian aim is "to give the girls the same healthy life and the same range of intellectual training as we give to boys, together with the intercourse and wider interests of a school life shared with them." Bedales clings to the high ideals of a good English boys' school. It fosters courage, physical excellence, the avoidance of sentimentality, and the abhorrence of pretence, and it believes that these virtues are equally good

¹ Cf. p. 145 ff.

for the girls. The latter, on the other hand, lend a softening and civilizing touch which in a boy's school is absent. The girls contribute to a higher standard of work; conscientiousness and unselfishness are stimulated.

To grow up together on terms of comradeship, in the performance of common duties and the pursuit of common aims, is the surest way to bring about a simpler, healthier, and more helpful relationship between the sexes, and to remove the misunderstanding and self-consciousness that at present not only make a barrier between them in school years, but are also the cause of so much folly and unhappiness in youth and maturer life.

This is the credo of Bedales.

Bedales accents coöperation strikingly—although this, of course, is not unique, since it is found in virtually all the progressive schools in one form or another. Competition as a spur to effort is banned because inherently it is selfish; the cause of many evils, it is the root of much social and international misunderstanding. To obviate it as far as possible in the classroom, Bedales gives no marks for daily classroom work; nor does it give medals or prizes for excellence in school studies, except when work is done under special

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conditions. The motive for good work is to be the pleasure derived from doing good work.

Bedales gives a similar all-round education to all pupils up to the age of fifteen. After that age variety is afforded. The school is divided into three main divisions: (1) Lower School, for children up to the age of eleven or twelve; (2) Middle School, for children between twelve and sixteen; and (3) Upper School, for children from sixteen on.

The Lower School uses the Montessori methods,² and although a fairly elastic program is pursued, the following is a fair description of an average day: The pupils, who live in the so-called Junior House, are out of bed at 7:15. Fifteen minutes later they have their setting-up drills, outdoors if possible. Breakfast is at 8:00. At 8:30 come such doings as bed-making, taking weather charts, feeding animals, and helping in the pantry. Two children wait on table; another couple clears away the dishes; and two more youngsters wash the dishes. At 9:00 there is an assembly of the whole school which includes music and the news of the day. At 9:30 individual work in the classroom begins. From 10:30 to 1:00 the child chooses his activities, which may include weaving, pottery,

² Cf. p. 19 ff.

printing, carpentry, music and singing, and country dancing. Each group must be outdoors from twenty to thirty minutes; in summer, all swimmers bathe before dinner. At 1:00 dinner is served, and following dinner is a rest period, which in summer sometimes lasts until 3:00. An outdoor period for games, riding, swimming (for beginners), gardening, walks, and the like lasts from 2:30 to 4:50. At 4:50 the children change clothes. At 5:00 or 5:15 tea is served. From 5:30 to 6:30 (or 7:15 or 7:45, according to the age of the child) there is intellectual work in classrooms which includes group lessons, the rehearsing of plays, and so on. Saturday as far as possible is a slack day, the first part of the morning being used for cleaning up workshops, tidying up, and similar odd jobs, while the remainder of the day is used for outdoor activities. If the weather is inclement, there are other activities, such as dancing or dramatics. In the summer whole days are often given over to excursions to the sea or distant parts of the country. In winter the older children of the Junior House attend lectures, concerts, and plays given in the Upper School.

After many years of experience, Bedales believes it is a mistake to expect young children to be
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engaged in intellectual work during a large part of the morning. The small child, it is thought, gets up bursting with the desire for creative activity, and this urge Bedales heeds. The children spend the first hour in their classroom doing intellectual work, after which they are free for the rest of the morning to work at anything in which they happen to be interested at the moment—provided, however, that they work constructively at something. The various craft rooms are in most cases outside the building, so that the children are constantly moving in fresh air as they go to and from these rooms. In addition they have a prescribed “out period,” during which they must be outdoors.

The children are initiated also into music. Under the leadership of Arnold Dolmetsch, many a young Bedalian has learned to love music. In teaching his art to children, Dolmetsch stresses the music, not the technique; music is to be an experience. A youngster is given an instrument, shown how to use it, and put into the orchestra with the suggestion that he do as well as possible. When this scheme was first tried out, there were some fears that the children might lose heart and hence not want to try again. Curiously enough, nothing of the sort occurred: when the master

came, the children were awaiting him. There is of course some private teaching, but usually this is linked to the part which the child plays in the orchestra, the aim being to help the young musician learn his orchestral parts by ear. That dull enemy of childhood, Drill, and his villainous twin, Routine, are banished from the orchestral lessons; there is no beating of time; nor are there any pedagogic tantrums if the young musicians fail to play like Zimbalist or Kreisler.

To make the use of stringed instruments somewhat easier for his charges, the maestro had frets put upon all the finger boards. The child is thus able to play in tune from the very outset, the frets being gradually removed as he makes progress. Moreover, to lessen the strain of holding the violin—a strain which for little children is often quite severe—their teacher has the youngsters sit down, so that they hold their violin or viola between the knees and stroke it like a cello. When the child wants to hold his violin in the more usual way, he may do so; but he is never urged to attempt it before he is ready.

The child's musical education is continued in the same liberal way in the main school, where the choir and orchestra undertake works that are, as a
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rule, out of the range of a school of the size of Bedales. But it is particularly in choral singing that music plays a large part in the daily life of the school. The more gifted, as usual, are able to get special training in smaller voluntary groups, but the chorus is not a picked group; as far as possible, the whole school participates, for Bedales believes that, while such a large and mixed participation may make the learning of a piece somewhat slower and more laborious, in the end it is of the utmost value to the less musical. Notably, in the school's choral work, as well as in its dramatics, coeducation is plainly an advantage. The range of voices makes it possible in music to take in all parts; and in dramatics it simplifies the problem of casting the women's rôles.

In the Middle School the specific aim is "to give to all a wide, general course of training that will develop all the powers that a child may possess and so prepare for later specialization in any direction that may be required." Special attention is given to the mother tongue—in particular to composition, oral and written—the reading of literature, and dramatics. The latter are very popular, and everyone has ample opportunity to participate. Among the foreign languages French takes first

place. Latin, interestingly enough, is taken "by all those who can profit by an ancient language as well"; but Greek is not studied at the Middle School. The usual academic subjects, including history, geography, mathematics, and science, also have a place. The latter is launched with nature study and eventually leads to physics, chemistry, and biology, a triumvirate which is studied concurrently. And it should be unnecessary to add besides that Bedales holds the arts and crafts in high esteem. Every pupil must take two kinds of arts and crafts, among these being the various branches of drawing, carpentry and other forms of handiwork, sewing, and cooking. All pupils must take some form of music, and those of musical ability can learn an instrument and play in the school orchestra. Of course all this work is not taken at the same time, for even in a progressive school there are only twenty-four hours to the day. In some instances it is found to be better for the student to limit the number of subjects he studies, so that it is possible to make essential individual adjustments. More time may thus be given to those subjects which need special attention. If it is desirable, a pupil may give more attention, for example, to the handicrafts.

In the lowest classes of the Middle School the child's daily program is well mapped out, calling for regular classroom work in specific subjects at a given time. It should be noted, however, that these classes are intended for children who have not studied in the Junior School. Reared by the Montessori Method, with its emphasis on freedom and spontaneity, the children of the Junior School have whetted their appetite for knowledge; they are able, moreover, to satisfy this hunger by working by themselves. For such children a set program would inevitably be a curse. Certainly it would be very different from the early education in the Junior School.

But why are not the same methods used for all children in the Middle School? Why should those pupils who have not previously attended the Junior School be instructed differently? The answer is almost obvious. These children are taught as has been indicated simply because the great majority of them have not learned how to work independently; for them a training stage is necessary. The aim, briefly put, is to teach these children how to work. They are taught to understand what they are going to learn; how to obtain the knowledge needed; and how to record their

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results. The groups are small; instruction is made as living as possible, as are the class discussions. Lectures are prepared and given; dramatizations, games, drawing, and modeling add flavor and zest to learning. Moreover, in the Middle School, except for frequent short tests, the children do not take any formal examination.

The Upper School is different in the latter respect. Here Bedales holds that

. . . in almost all cases it is good for the children to have a definite examination to work for, and an outside standard by which to measure themselves. The one most nearly suited to our purpose is the School Certificate of the Oxford and Cambridge Joint Standard.

Ordinarily this examination is taken at about the age of seventeen. But once the examination is out of the way, the students are free to specialize according to lines of their own choice. Those who have the ability are encouraged to work for university scholarships. For those who are not going ahead academically, special courses of work are provided. These are of wide nature and are based on the exigencies of everyday life. Naturally enough, the requirements of the pupil's probable vocation are taken into consideration.

Bedales

Much stress is given to health and physical well-being. Nine and a half hours are reserved for sleep; the younger children go to bed an hour earlier than the rest. Special consideration is given to health and nutrition. Parents are requested "not to send any eatables, sweets, etc., or allow them to be brought from home." While in use, all rooms have open windows. Three mornings a week a period is devoted to physical education, and a period is used each week for the study of the theory of growth and health. Every child is examined at the beginning and at the end of the term, and a record of his height, weight, and other essential details is kept. When necessary, special individual treatment is given in addition to ordinary classwork. Every pupil is expected to participate in the school games. In winter, soccer football is compulsory for the boys, and lacrosse for the girls; in summer, cricket is required of both. Seniors who do not enjoy these games may be excused, provided they participate in some other outdoor equivalent. Gymnastics are replaced during the summer by swimming, which every normal youngster is taught.

Unlike some progressive schools, Bedales has no permanent Scouts' organization. Not that the

school does not sympathize with most of the ideals of this society. The fact is that a troop was established at the school on more than one occasion. But such an organization never remained permanently: the reason, according to the Bedalian authorities, is that probably there is no real need for the Scouts' organization at the school, since the latter already provides much of what the former has to offer.

Bedales is proud of the fact that it has no Cadet Corps. And the absence of this organization is no accident. It is, actually, in perfect harmony with the school's high ideal of fostering international good-will and understanding. Bedales has a small rifle range where most of its seniors learn how to pull a steady trigger, but the school emphatically deprecates the inculcation of the military spirit in education. Plainly, this has no place in a world which wishes peace.

The accusation, sometimes hurled at the new schools, that they minimize or even overlook the value of religious education, cannot be brought up against Bedales. "Besides the life of the body, and beyond even the life of the mind, the life of the spirit is our chief concern,"³ is the viewpoint of

³ J. H. Badley, *Bedales*, p. 212.

Badley, the Bedalian headmaster. He says:⁴

All that the present offers, as well as all that the past has given us, is, in its highest use, a means of developing this life of the spirit. That is the final meaning of education. Beyond the needs of the present it looks forward and works for the coming of the Kingdom—not only man's kingdom over nature, nor even over himself, but that Kingdom of the spirit to which saints and prophets, and One, the greatest of all, have pointed as the goal of human aspiration and endeavor. This . . . if we are faithful to our vision, we can help each new generation to bring a little nearer; for it can only come not by any sudden transformation but by slow growth within the heart.

If Bedales stresses the development of the spirit, it does not accept the hoary religious education which puts a premium upon creed. The implanting of creed has no place at Bedales. "To creeds and ceremonies and the varying tenets of which rival churches make so much, we attach little importance. A creed is a thing that each age must restate in its own language and in accordance with the knowledge and needs of its own time."⁵ Like Faust, Bedales believes that "name is only sound and smoke befogging the glow of heaven." What matters is not the words in which we wrap

⁴ *Loc. cit.*

⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 210.

our faith: what matters rather is that our faith be living; that it be the source and fashioner of our actions.

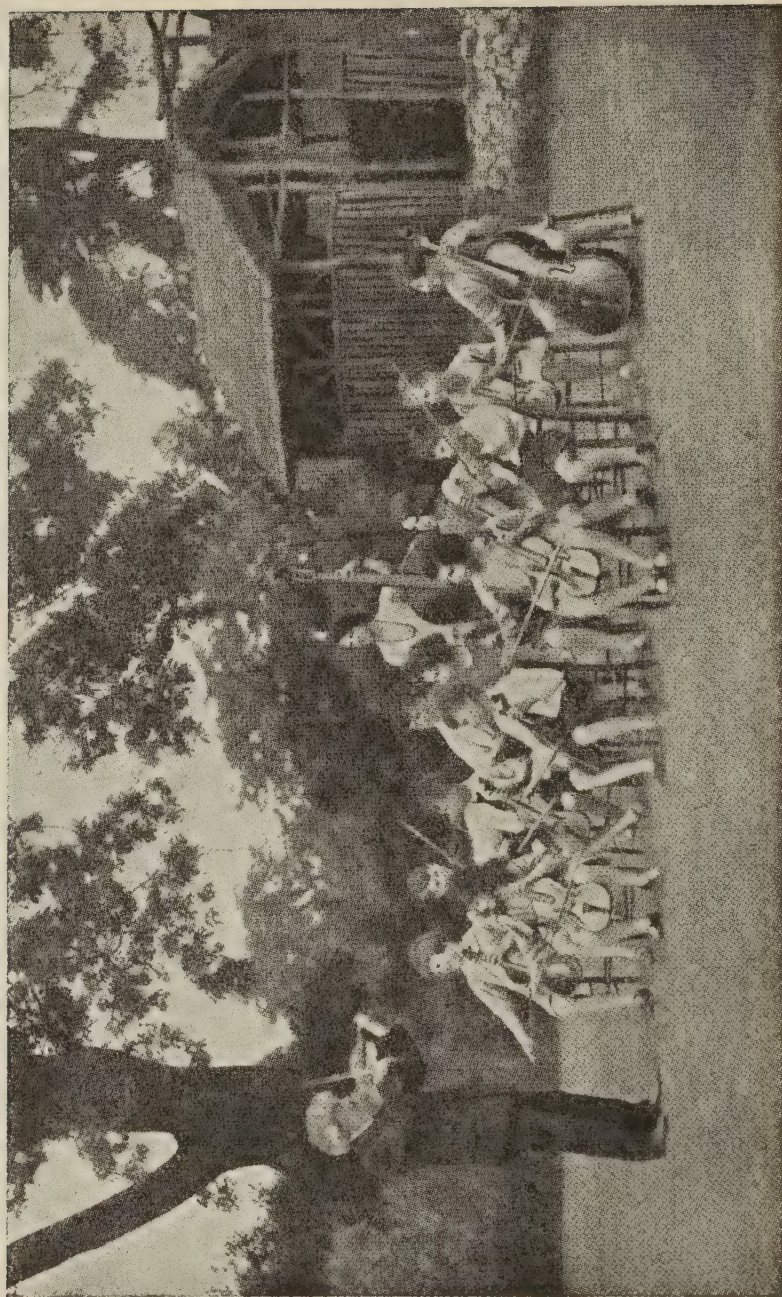
At Bedales religious attendance is not compulsory, except for those children whose parents have demanded regular religious attendance. Every Sunday evening, however, the school conducts services, during which there is music and singing. Usually an address is made by a member of the staff or by a visitor. Often parents are present at these gatherings. Naturally, these services are in no sense sectarian.

Discipline and its maintenance are closely related to the training of character and responsibility, but a visit to Bedales would reveal very few of the more familiar marks of discipline. In most of the study rooms the children have real freedom; only in the library is strict silence preserved. The maintenance of order is, of course, based on a very real sort of self-government—a government which is much more than machinery. Some organization there is, but this is reduced to its minimum essentials.

In the management of the school and its life as great a share as possible is given to the older boys and girls. The organization and direction of
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play, for example, is in charge of elected captains. Internal government is in the hands of prefects who are appointed by the headmaster. Outwardly the prefects have no sign of authority: they do not, as in some of the older and more conventional schools, carry canes, and except for making a delinquent do something he has failed to do, they do not themselves administer punishment. Furthermore, they never inflict corporal punishment: that is in the hands of the headmaster solely, and is resorted to but rarely.

The most potent instrument of self-government at Bedales is probably the school council, or parliament, which in some respects is similar to the school-community idea flourishing at Odenwald and Wickersdorf in Germany. This body is made up of a number of officials such as the headmaster, the house master and house mistress, all form masters, and the head boy or girl, as well as a number of elected representatives from each of the twelve classes in the main school. One of the main functions of this body is to revise every year the rules of the school. Some of these rules, no longer necessary because of changed conditions, are deleted; others may be in need of modification. And, of course, new and seemingly desirable



OUTDOOR ORCHESTRA PRACTICE IN THE JUNIOR SCHOOL

rules may be enacted: whatever rules are finally agreed upon are to be in effect for the current year, to be changed only by the school council. But outside its legislative function the school council seeks to initiate the discussion of any points which any members may wish to bring up. Self-government at Bedales does not mean, as in some new schools, that the pupils are allowed, or even expected, to decide for themselves what they shall do: only within certain limits is such freedom considered practicable. However, such matters as the pupils can decide for themselves they have opportunity and freedom to decide. Control from above that fails to develop the power of self-control is deemed undesirable.

CHAPTER XI

RUSSELL AND BEACON HILL

TO American educators the name of Bertrand Russell is familiar. For many years this gifted Englishman has been attracting a large American audience to both his writings and his lectures. A superb example of the cloistered scholar before the World War, before the end of the war Russell was to undergo a remarkable metamorphosis. He emerged from his peaceful sanctum of mathematical and philosophical lore to enter a very real and turbulent world. Here he attacked contemporary statesmen, their policies, and war with such vigor and venom that he earned for himself the names of "pacifist" and "traitor." Ever since those days Russell has been a tireless participator in social and economic controversies.

In 1917 appeared Russell's *Principles of Social Reconstruction*, in which he outlines the fundamentals of post-war social reconstruction. In the chapter on education he makes a plea for a thorough change in our educational policies and

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objectives. In 1926 Russell wrote his first full-sized book on education—*Education and the Good Life*. Written primarily for the layman, this volume is a simple and readable discussion of modern educational principles. Russell hurls down the gauntlet to conventional education; whole broadsides are directed against traditional taboos. Like his eminent predecessor, Spencer, Russell called for more training in the sciences. As it stands, the book is of course mainly theoretical. Yet in 1927 Russell and his wife founded a school to put their educational theories into practice: this is the Beacon Hill School, built on a fairly isolated estate of twenty-one acres, close to the southern English coast. Russell's most recent literary effort in education, *Education and the Modern World*, was issued in 1932; from the standpoints of both style and content it is similar to his *Education and the Good Life*.

The aim of education, according to Bertrand Russell, is to produce men and women of courage, vitality, sensitiveness, and intelligence. Of these, vitality is a physiological quality. It implies the possession of energy beyond that which is actually consumed by a normal, healthy person; it is related to one's power to do things; and in

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the end it should promote happiness. "Vitality promotes interest in the outside world; it also promotes the power of hard work. Moreover, it is a safeguard against envy, because it makes one's existence pleasant."¹ Russell does not say precisely how one is to develop vitality, but one may infer that good habits of sleep, eating, and the like are necessary.

By courage Russell does not have in mind the bull-dog variety, for this after all is rather ignorant. Found in many forms, courage is most significant in the absence of irrational fears: it is nurtured by an objective outlook on life, and this requires the cultivation of things beyond oneself. Love, knowledge, and art are the three highroads.

In fact every interest in something outside a man's own body makes his life to that degree impersonal. For this reason, paradoxical as it may seem, a man of wide and vivid interests finds less difficulty in leaving life than is experienced by some miserable hypochondriac whose interests are bounded by his own ailments.²

The man of courage is not only the man without fear: he is the man with many interests; he is the

¹ *On Education*, p. 49.

² *Op. cit.*, pp. 54-55.

man with an active intelligence; and he is also the man who feels himself a small, though not unimportant, speck in a vast world.

With regard to sensitiveness Russell says,³ "A purely theoretical definition would be that a person is emotionally sensitive when many stimuli produce emotions in him. . . ." The desideratum, however, is not mere emotional intensity, but appropriateness of response. Sensitiveness appears in children about the fifth month, or during that period when sensations other than those related to pleasure and food begin to appear. An important phase of sensitiveness is sympathy. Much of the unhappiness of the world, Russell says, has its roots in our stunted sympathy—the cruelty of industrialism, the oppression of subject races, the barbarity of war. And, of course, still another domain of sensitiveness is our esthetic emotions.

The instinctive basis of intellectual life is curiosity, but the latter is "inspired by a genuine love of knowledge."⁴ Children, as everyone knows, possess a vast curiosity; the old education, however, has too often neglected, and has even tried to suppress, the child's curiosity. The partners of

³ *Op. cit.*, p. 55.

⁴ *Education and the Good Life*, p. 75.

curiosity are found in certain techniques which facilitate the acquisition of knowledge, such as the habits of observation, patience, carefulness, exactness, and industry.

Believing that education, particularly in America, has too often neglected not only literary but general esthetic values, Russell wants the school to give more attention to sense training and dancing, to music and singing. The school should be a doing school in which the child can practice expression. Let each child discover for himself what colors and sounds and rhythms please him individually. Let there be coöperative activities to which each child can contribute according to his special talents.

One of the best spurs to intellectual interest is free discussion, and the child in his later years should be encouraged to argue on every controversial question. In questions of religion, society, or politics a child should be allowed to make up his own mind. In history his outlook should be international rather than national or political. "Open-mindedness should . . . be one of the qualities that education aims at producing."⁵

⁵ *On Education*, p. 61.

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Russell's views on morals and sex are well-known in the United States. This English thinker holds, briefly, that we should impart knowledge solely for intellectual reasons, since to let moral considerations influence instruction is bad for both character and intelligence. The virtues of the cultured man, according to Russell, are courage, sensitiveness, and love. He must have courage to espouse unpopular causes, when he believes they are right; he must be sensitive to social and economic evils and injustices; and he must love his fellow-man.

Fearlessness is inherent in the good life, but too often prudish, or even obscene, adults have wrought irreparable harm on the child by setting up about him an unnecessary barrier of taboos. Matters in which the young take a spontaneous interest are sometimes considered beyond the pale of decorous discussion. Particularly is this true in the matter of sex, and here Russell urges honestly complete frankness. Questions about sex should be answered like all other questions, and with an attitude that is scientific at least in the sense of being specialized common sense. "Do not allow yourself to feel, even unconsciously, that there is something horrid and dirty about sex. If you do, your feeling will [188]

communicate itself to [the child].”⁶ Treat sex intelligently, and you will find, according to Russell, that children are more interested in trains and airplanes than in sex.

Unlike many modern educators, Russell is not opposed to “knowledge for its own sake”; but he emphasizes that the acquisition of such knowledge must not be a boring process. Education in a sense should be “an intellectual adventure.” “Let the relation of knowledge to real life be very visible to your pupils, and let them understand how by knowledge the world could be transformed.”⁷ Pupils, Russell feels, should not be encouraged to seek ulterior motives. Only when disinterested curiosity is not present in the learning process should stress be placed on the desire for skill that may have utilitarian value. It is unavoidable that “skill should be in part merely that required for artificial school tasks.” Pure learning, of course, has its place—and a very important place it is.

New knowledge is the chief cause of progress, and without it the world would soon become stationary. It could continue, for a time, to improve by the diffusion and wider use of existing knowledge, but this

⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 170.

⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 226.

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process, by itself, could not last long. . . . Utilitarian knowledge needs to be fructified by disinterested investigation, which has no motive beyond the desire to understand the world better. All the great advances are at first purely theoretical. . . .⁸

Some subjects have no practical use, but they should not therefore be cast out of the curriculum. We should "allow a large place to pure curiosity, without which much of the valuable knowledge (as for example, pure mathematics) would never have been discovered."

Reference has already been made to the Beacon Hill School at Petersfield. As an experimental school, Beacon Hill seeks to apply its founder's educational theories in practice. Thus far it has restricted its registration to children below the age of seven. To accept children beyond this age is not considered practicable, since such youngsters have already been in the clutches of conventional education, and hence too many previous influences of questionable merit would have to be undone. In time, however, Beacon Hill hopes to keep some of its present pupils into their teens.

The school accepts and strives to apply the principle that no knowledge should be withheld

⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 243.

from the child. This implies complete frankness on the known facts of sex, marriage, and bodily functions. Boys and girls exercise and bathe together, without clothing if the weather permits. Since the children are fairly young, they are in the main inhibited by few previous taboos. The older children have been found at first to be somewhat overinterested in sex and bodily functions, but gradually, as the novelty wears off, their interest has been found to slacken.

Beacon Hill highly respects the individuality of every child. A careful study is made of the child's physical development, and an attempt is made to understand his physical needs. While all the younger children are required to be in class from nine till eleven or eleven-thirty in the morning, during this time each youngster may choose his occupation. There is a great variety of material which is used in common, including such things as beads, cards, pictures and words for reading, Montessori materials, blocks, paints, and clay. Each child has his own counting beads and cards, as well as his pencil and writing book. The younger children have very little classwork except in music, dancing, and French; but here again, should a child not be inclined to do French or

music, he is permitted to go on with the work which is occupying his interest. Dancing, it should be noted, is never compulsory, but the children always seem eager for it.

A set form of dancing is not taught over a long period; instead, the children engage in various free movements, outdoors if possible. About ten minutes every day are devoted to postural exercises—these have become more or less compulsory. The latter part of the morning is given over to rest, and this too, whenever possible, takes place outdoors. Interestingly enough, however, Beacon Hill does not believe in conducting such activities as painting or nature study outdoors, because it is felt that concentration is much better in a well-equipped and properly ventilated classroom. Dinner comes at one o'clock; after that one may do as one pleases until supper, and afterwards until bedtime.

In the early part of the morning children of the older group may choose between working on ordinary subjects in the classroom and doing work in manipulative science in the laboratory. During the latter part of the morning one may choose science or manual work, the latter including such activities as painting, modeling, sewing, weaving,
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and raffia work. For the older pupils certain work is set for the week; the youngster may arrange his time, but he must make an effort to finish his week's work on schedule. Again, however, an attempt is made to adjust the work to the child's ability and interests: if, for example, he is not very keen about a particular subject, for some time he will be given small assignments in that subject.

As might be expected, the older group has some classwork, but moderation is the keynote. There is work until one o'clock. After lunch comes a rest period, and then the children are free until bedtime. Beacon Hill has no organized games; yet if any group wants to play, it can take up such games as net ball, tennis, or children's baseball. Besides, plenty of walks and excursions are encouraged: frequently the children go with their science teacher to prowl through the woods in search of the local flora and fauna. It may also be noted that they are free to work in the science laboratory. Usually the child is thus able to become familiar with a good bit of elementary science even before he has mastered the arts of reading and writing. Put into an environment with books on anatomy and physiology, diagrams,

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and so on, the child almost unwittingly learns the parts of the body and the positions of the various organs.

Beacon Hill tries to develop a moral and reasoning human being through social contacts. It does not teach abstract moral principles to the young child, for it believes such teaching to be practically useless. Let the child be treated unkindly by one of his fellows, and he will then begin to have some understanding of the need and meaning of kindness. Let a child interfere with an activity, such as a meal, and he will soon be corrected by his fellows. Group morality, the Russells have found, springs automatically from within, and it is this that makes for satisfactory adjustments between the child and his fellows. As far as possible, then, Beacon Hill seeks to impose nothing from without. Through the observation of the child's free behavior, the school seeks to discover his tendencies and his faults, and in cases of abnormal behavior recognized psychological methods are applied to effect a cure. The fact that apparently nothing is forbidden has, in fact, an interesting effect on some children. The newcomer at Beacon Hill is usually inclined to take full advantage of the situation; [194]

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since all barriers have been lifted, he is likely to do almost anything. Before long, however, he begins to learn that some things are not tolerated by the other children; hence, in order not to arouse social disapproval, he stops doing things which have a disturbing influence.

The idea that experience in nature is the best teacher of moral conduct is, of course, not new; it was not new to Spencer in the nineteenth century, nor to Locke and Rousseau in the eighteenth. The ancient saying that the burnt child dreads the fire is founded on this hypothesis, which at bottom seeks to allow causes to be followed by their natural effects. But there are, of course, certain limitations, and with these Russell is quite familiar. For example, a child is not allowed to fall off a cliff; nor may he cast stilettos about. Whenever the effects are harmful to the child or his fellows, this method cannot be followed. Otherwise, however, there are no prohibitions.

Summarily, we may note that Beacon Hill does not stress curriculum and methods: it is much more concerned with the great task of developing emancipated men and women. Thus in the educational work of the Russells three

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points stand out. The child is allowed great personal freedom in his work and play. He is given no direct moral, ethical, or religious teaching, and the consciousness of social or national superiority is carefully eschewed. And, finally, a serious effort is made to wipe out conventional taboos in the realms of sex, parenthood, and bodily functions.

CHAPTER XII

THE DANISH FOLK HIGH SCHOOLS

INSPIRED in part by the lofty preachments of Grundtvig, a cleric and poet, but assisted also by the sedulous work of a group of patriotic Danes, the original Danish folk high school was founded in 1844. In its essence an economic, cultural, and spiritual movement, this was expected to serve as a spur to the revival of Danish culture. And today, despite this early origin, the Danish folk high schools are still potent in their influence. Indeed, some of the main features of modern adult education throughout the world find a counterpart in some of the work of these Danish schools.

For his pioneer efforts in the development of the Danish folk high school, Grundtvig has become known as the "father of the folk high school." A man of deep spirituality, Grundtvig had gradually come to the belief that the salvation and future progress of his native land could be achieved only through absolute faith in God and a devotion to the glorious achievements of the early Danes.

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On the pedestal of this conviction rests Grundtvig's idea of a new and better national education.

Grundtvig's Rödning school was intended as an antidote for the formal and conventional brand of education of the regular secondary schools. It was situated in the northern part of Slesvig, and was expected to serve as a spiritual fortress against the encroaching Prussians. Four years after the establishment of the school, Denmark and Prussia grappled on the battlefield, with ruinous consequences, as everyone knows, for the Danes. Yet this disaster was assuaged by a few gains in other directions. Even before the diplomatic gentry had got together to make up their minds concerning the precise stipulations of a just peace between the two lands, the people of Denmark had treated themselves to a constitutional government. Meanwhile, the spirit of Danish nationalism had become more and more powerful, and this spirit was just the stimulant needed to give new life to the folk high school.

At about this time the name of Christian Kold first became connected with the folk high-school movement. A peasant by birth, Kold had attended a training school for rural schoolmasters. Like Grundtvig, he was deeply spiritual; moreover, he

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had been influenced by the "Holy Revival"—a religious current that ran counter to the traditional forms of Lutheran worship—and was something of a liberal, so that he was impressed by Grundtvig's national and religious ideals. Thus he spent a part of his early life as a teacher. Later his pedagogical views became so unorthodox, and were such a source of displeasure to his superiors, that he was virtually forced out of the teaching profession. However, thanks to the establishment of the liberal government and to the consequent loss of power among the reactionaries, he was at last able to turn again to teaching—this time in his own private way.

Kold was an ardent follower of Grundtvig, and with the advice and help of the clergyman he established in 1851 a folk high school at Ryslinge, on the island of Funen. He bought a few acres of ground, and with a small sum of money and much ambition, built a small shack consisting of a kitchen and a living room and a three-windowed school-room. In the beginning he had some fifteen students, aged between fourteen and thirty-three; together with Kold they slept in the attic. Subsequently Kold removed his school to another part of the island. In 1862 he built a much larger school

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at Dalum, and here every year he attracted some one hundred students.

Kold was magnetic. His ability to get in touch with the young man of the common people was unusual, as was also his gift for arousing a desire for a richer spiritual life. In his teaching his approach was oral, for he felt that personal contact with his audience was most important. When he first began his teaching, he spoke on history, literature, and the Scriptures, and his talks were always followed by a flow of free discussion. Naturally, as time slipped by, his pedagogical ideas and procedure were frequently changed and adjusted to his experience, but even with the expansion of the folk high-school movement and the growth of a more precise academic procedure, the pedagogy which underlies this procedure has never been ritualized. Kold was not interested in knowledge *per se*. During his lectures he did not even allow his hearers to take notes. He once said,

If we lay a drain pipe, we mark the spot in order to find it again in case of necessary repair, but when we sow grain it is not necessary to mark the spot, for the grain comes forth by itself. And you may be sure that what you have heard and enjoyed hearing will come forth again when it has taken root in your mind.

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Kold believed that if he could awaken his pupils to an understanding of the personal value of human life, it would be relatively easy for them to acquire learning that would enable them to get on in the world. Once when two farm laborers asked him what good they would derive from being his pupils, Kold replied: "We used to have a grandfather's clock at home which, when wound up, would run for a week, but I shall wind you up so that never in your life will you stop again."

Today there are some sixty of these people's schools throughout Denmark. The folk high schools are private ventures and hence are not part of the established system of public education. Attendance, obviously, is strictly voluntary. But though the schools are private, the Danish state donates funds annually to help in their support, and some 9000 young men and women, aged between seventeen and thirty, annually attend. Such schools, of course, vary greatly in dimension: the smallest comprises about twenty students, while the largest has a capacity of about two hundred.

The folk schools, as has been suggested, are not interested in turning out men of learning. This burden they leave to the regular and better-

equipped secondary and higher schools. The folk high school aims "to enable pupils to return to their daily work with a deeper understanding of human life and its problems." And with this in mind the directors of the folk high schools have clung close to the ideals of the movement's founding fathers. Thus the social subjects and letters are stressed, and the environment is socialized. The pedagogic method is mainly the lecture and discussion. And although it is informal, learning proceeds in the grand manner, for its own sake, for pleasure and mental excitement, without social or economic goads—indeed, even without such academic ornaments as examinations, credits, degrees, and diplomas.

Twentieth-century Denmark is of course very different from the Denmark of Grundtvig. During the lifetime of the Lutheran cleric the nation was predominantly agricultural; today less than half the population is engaged in farming. When the folk high schools first came into being, the spirit of nationalism was effervescing; today the international spirit is much more potent. The original folk high schools catered primarily to the untutored; today the general culture of the masses is on a much higher level. Yet despite these and many [202]

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other transformations, the folk high school's fundamental goal is as valid as ever. This, as has been said, was primarily spiritual, and in the contemporary post-war world with its multitudes of disintegrating, corrupting forces, the spiritual influence of the folk high school is probably more needed than ever.

The folk high school has not been unmindful of changing social and economic conditions. In striving to lift the masses of young people to a higher *niveau*, or spirit-level, in life, it has become an influence among the working classes. It must, therefore, be something more than a country school. At Copenhagen, notably, there is a large free folk high school, which since 1911 has been featuring so-called holiday courses. Officially the program is known as, "A Week at a Folk High School." Thousands of students have participated in the holiday courses.

A more recent development of the folk high-school movement is the celebrated International Folk High School at Elsinore, which aims "to bring young men and women from different nations together for mutual study and daily intercourse." It began its work in 1921 under the direction of its principal, Peter Manniche, with an enrolment of

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twenty-four pupils from eight different countries, and today it has more than a hundred pupils every year. Most of the pupils are Scandinavians, of which, as might be expected, the greater number are Danish; Americans, Englishmen, and Germans also attend. The school is "personal in its methods and ethical in its aims, trying to assert the Christian principles in individual, social and national life." Lectures and discussions are featured, with much stress on individual, private study; the curriculum is flexible and includes virtually everything of significance. A great deal of emphasis, however, is put on the study of foreign languages, and wherever possible foreign tongues are taught by native teachers. It is in this work that the school has been particularly successful.

CHAPTER XIII

THE NEW EDUCATION IN AUSTRIA

AS constituted today, Austria is the eastern outpost of the German language and nationality. Around this diminutive republic are many races and nationalities—Slavs to the north, Magyars to the east, Italians to the south. Yet among these Austria is distinguished. Long known for her culture, she is renowned especially for her music and art. She has many masterpieces of Gothic architecture. Her drama has always held a high place, the former Viennese Hoftheater and the present Bundestheater even now enjoying world-wide repute. And opera has a vaunted tradition which began as early as 1640, when the first musical plays were performed in the imperial castle. Vienna is, of course, the best-known center of music, for here such celebrities as Haydn, Gluck and Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms and Bruckner, Mahler and Johann Strauss, lived and worked. And at Salzburg, on the border of the mighty Alps, is the birthplace of Mozart.

A proud Hapsburg empire before the World War, Austria in 1914 had 260,000 square miles of territory and a population of 51,000,000. In 1918, by the Constitutional Act of that date, she was converted into a parliamentary democracy. And by the Treaty of St. Germain, of September, 1919, Austria was reduced to a small state with an area of but 32,000 square miles and a population of approximately 6,500,000, of which some 1,800,000 are clustered in Vienna.

With the passing of the Hapsburg dynasty, the Social Democrats rose to power. Counterbalancing their control were strong parties representing the interests of the Church and the bourgeoisie, which were inclined to conservatism and acted as bridle and bit to check the radical elements in the industrial towns and the larger cities. Vienna thus became the citadel of the socialists. Today the power of the socialists has waned, but while they were in office they were able, despite much and bitter opposition, to carry out some important reforms. They launched and effected extensive municipal housing projects which have alleviated crowded living conditions and raised the standards of living of the working classes. They assumed control of existing apartments, and regulated [206]

rents. They provided doles for the unemployed, organized projects to give employment, and mediated between employes and employers. And, finally, they brought into being a colossal program for the welfare of the children and youth of the land.

Under these influences two main ideas have entered the educational system of republican Austria: (1) to provide education for every child within the school laws, and (2) to find a fairer and better way of selecting those who are to go on to higher schools at the close of their compulsory period of education. The first of these aims has effected a change in the curriculum of the elementary school as well as in the existing methods of teaching; the second has brought special attention to the "common-school-for-all" idea. As it happened, war and post-war conditions decreased the number of school children; at the same time there was a surplus of teachers, and as a result classes grew smaller—a situation favorable to the carrying out of the reform. However, over a decade passed before new teachers could be admitted to the schools, so that the reform had to be carried out by teachers who were accustomed to the old-style education.

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As an expression of the spirit of post-war Austria, the new school is a devotee of democracy. At bottom the reformers sought to break down the old barriers that kept one school system for the intellectual or ruling classes and another system for the masses; this was the so-called dual system, not typical of Austria alone but of many European nations. And to make their school system more democratic, the Austrian school reformers converted the first four years into a foundation school, or as the Austrians call it, a *Grundschule*. In 1927 the *Hauptschule* was inaugurated. A part of the regular compulsory school system, the *Hauptschule* is an upper elementary school receiving children from the fourth class of the *Grundschule* without examination. The *Hauptschule* is divided into two sections, one for the slower pupils and one for the more able, the latter having in particular the opportunity to study a modern language. This school opens the road to higher education to thousands of children in the smaller towns and hamlets: it is now possible for them to remain at home until they are fourteen years old without surrendering their chance to enter secondary school and subsequently the university. Still another important function of the *Hauptschule* is to give

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a good practical education to those children who, after eight years of schooling, will go either to vocational classes or to work. The last four classes of the regular elementary school—the *Volksschule*—differ from the *Hauptschule* in the omission of a foreign language in the curriculum.

The new schools in the main are progressive. Pupils no longer sit in the old-time fixed and formal benches. Now they have chairs and sit at small tables, usually in semicircles. Every child can talk to all the others from his own place. The teacher has slipped off his robes of superiority; he is now expected to be a friend and helper. Speaking at Elsinore, Denmark, in 1929, Otto Glöckel, then President of the Board of Education of Vienna, said,¹

The children discover the necessary rules one by one, out of their own experience. When one of them comes late, and cannot follow an interesting discussion which had already started when he arrived, he realizes that punctuality is desirable. When all children talk at once and cannot hear what they say, they understand that only one at a time should talk.

The teacher is given plenty of freedom, and is in a splendid position to exercise his initiative.

¹ Wm. Boyd (Ed.), *Towards a New Education*, p. 79.

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During the first four years the classes have no prearranged fixed programs, and no startling school bell starts and stops classes. A good part of the day is spent outside—in the street, in museums, shops, parks, and so on. Every teacher, however, is expected to have a definite program for every day, and this must be prepared in writing. In his teaching he is to consider the experience of his pupils, and especially to draw upon the events about which they may have heard. Sometimes he even asks his boys and girls what they would like to consider. Thus instruction is integrated, or as the Austrians put it, *Gesamtunterricht*: it is extracted from the pupil's own local environment.

Here and there, of course, there are still vestiges of the old drill method, yet in general newer methods based on discussion and group activity are flowering. A complete descriptive record (*Schülerbeschreibung*) is kept for every pupil, in which an attempt is made to clarify for reference the pupil's personality. Interestingly enough, a course in manual work is compulsory. Thus, on the whole, the model Austrian school endeavors to relate its work to culture and life: it is an activity school which has its source of interest

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and inspiration in the locality, and it is truly a community school.

Of particular interest to progressive schoolmen are the six Federal Educational Institutes—the *Bundeserziehungsanstalten*, or as they are sometimes referred to, the B. E. A. In the old imperial days these had been cadet schools, but after the revolution the state department of education reorganized them as secondary schools, and they became boarding schools for the education of gifted children. They sought in particular to give an opportunity for secondary education to those youngsters who, because of low economic status or remote residence, might otherwise lack it. The first of the Austrian higher schools to adopt the new curricula, the B. E. A. became experimental stations for the general reform. To be eligible for these schools, pupils must be highly recommended by their elementary-school teachers, must present a satisfactory certificate of physical condition, and qualify in an annual selective examination, which eliminates two-thirds to three-fourths of the applicants. Two of the six schools are set aside for girls. Tuition is charged on an adjusted sliding scale, based on family income; there are in addition a number of scholarships.

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The ideals and practices of these schools are modeled somewhat on those of the Lietzian *Landerziehungsheime*. The pupils are divided into class or family groups under the care of a teacher who is called an "educator" (to distinguish him from the teachers who simply give instruction in class). The educator is of equal rank with other staff members, but has a reduced teaching schedule so that he may devote his time and thought to the supervision of recreation, home life, physical care, study periods, and the myriad duties connected with his care of some twenty to forty charges. Moreover, in cultivating social responsibility the schools place great importance on the work of the pupils in the service of the school community. Farming, gardening, road construction, house-building, and the making of walks, swimming pools, and playing fields are just a few of their many practical occupations. Within the school the boys care for the dining-room service, libraries, and the homes. They have decorated and furnished their own rooms. They arrange concerts, shows, and festivals.

These schools obviously are very different from the traditional European secondary school. True to the ideals of progressive education, the B. E. A.

seek to educate the whole child. What is sought is a symmetrical education which develops mind, character, and body, so the schools strive to awaken the social sense, strong will, love of work, sense of duty, a feeling of responsibility towards home and country. Thus, in seeking this all-round development these schools have stressed music, arts, crafts, and physical education. Instruction is given on any musical instrument, and practically every craft is taught. The achievements in physical education also are distinguished, the great event of the year being the spring meet held in each of the boys' schools, in which every pupil takes part after he has been classified by a special physician according to age and physical possibilities.

Today there are over ninety kindergartens in Vienna. They are open all year round, and are looked upon as preparatory preschools. To teach in a kindergarten one must have the special training given in the kindergarten preparatory school, which the candidate attends for two years. (Vienna has one such training school.) Special opportunity is given to young and ambitious teachers to attend three-month courses in which they become familiar with the progress of new edu-

cational movements. In 1928 eleven such courses were available.

Another notable factor in Austrian school reform is the remarkable work of Professor Cizek in the art classes for gifted children, and the dissemination of his educational philosophy through students associated with him in the School of Arts and Crafts. For more than three decades Cizek has been urging the release of the child's natural powers through creative expression. Every child, Cizek believes, has a natural tendency to express himself through some form of creation, although such expression at the outset has not the slightest trace of artistry—it is nature, not art. The source of this creativeness, according to Cizek's belief, is found, first, in the child's surplus vitality, which seeks an outlet through some form of creative expression; later, when this excess energy begins to ebb somewhat, the child draws on what Cizek terms "the heritage of the ages"; finally, the child's creativeness is influenced by his environment. Here, too, great differences may be noted. Some children, for example, seem to develop spontaneously "almost independently of circumstances." Others seem so rigidly bound to circumstances as to be almost crippled in their natural capacity

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to create. In some cases alternate periods of independence and spontaneity may be noted.

Cizek's "soul heritage of the ages" is not always the same. The heritage may be latent, or it may be plainly lacking; and in some cases it may be confused. If the heritage is latent, consciousness must be aroused; if confused, it must be clarified. Through proper education an equilibrium must be effected so that the child will be able to acquire what is new. Concerning environment, Cizek deplores the waning cultural and educative puissance of the family, and as far as the average school is concerned, also, this Austrian artist fails to glow very enthusiastically: he has set it down as a place which "manufactures children instead of letting them grow."

Cizek holds that there are two egos in every individual—the conscious and the unconscious. It is the latter that puts its stamp on the child's work of art and lends it its individual charm, but the usual school stifles the child's unconscious ego. His spirit is maimed; his ability to express *himself* becomes distorted by adult ideas; the creative soul becomes languid; individuality dies. So Cizek tries to preserve for the youngster the child world—the unconscious ego. By informal suggestion and

by the praise of children's achievements, he seeks to help each child to formulate subconsciously the ideas that are struggling within him for interpretation. To Cizek the impulse to create, to play freely with forms and ideas in the manner of an artist, is a passing phase, which if properly nurtured lasts through childhood—only to disappear, however, in early adolescence. Therefore it is necessary to utilize this urge to creation during childhood, and to sustain and prolong it as much as possible. Then, in adolescence, pupils of average normal ability will have at least a fertile basis of ideas and sensory experience to put to work in the more formal crafts. Those rare spirits who have artistic gifts within them will go on developing creative power and will gradually acquire those techniques and standards which are the necessary foundation for the highest artistic expression.

Curiously enough, the talented Cizek does not look too kindly on the usual type of art education. Art education, he feels, should not be given in school. Since in school the usual teacher endeavors to exert an influence over his pupils, art education in the Cizek vein can hardly flourish. For creative work the teacher's influence is bad; Cizek, in fact, contends that his own influence is bad for his class—the best creative work is done

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by children when they are left to themselves. The teacher should keep aloof—"he should be a cipher." Thus, contending that he has no method, Cizek lets himself be guided by the children themselves. "We must let children grow," for which "there is no better method than the inner God." To the inner life of the child pedagogical technique can give no magic key, and to force forms upon the child which are not natural to him is to strangle his individuality.

Cizek's class works without any imposed discipline. Order and routine have no place in his school—often, indeed, his groups raise a great din. The only external aid to discipline is music, for rhythmic and actual singing are looked upon as important and valuable outlets for excess energy as well as stimulants of the creative powers. Still another outlet for creative energy, incidentally, has been found in the writing of diaries.

Of course, Cizek believes in homework. The child, however, is allowed his choice, and whatever he accomplishes is not criticized—it is neither praised nor blamed. The teacher merely voices his pleasure that the work has been done. Thus, through his creations the child attains self-realization, and even before he is six years old learns to beautify the world in which he lives.

CHAPTER XIV

THE RUSSIAN PRESCHOOLS

WITH the advent of Communism in Russia, education, as is well known, underwent a drastic change. Built on Marxian doctrines, the school system of modern Russia has been turned into a crucible for the making of loyal citizens. Briefly stated, the Communist education program has four main aspects. First, the pupils are to take an active part in the making of their own lives; second, socially useful labor is to be stressed; third, close contacts with modern life are to be established; and finally, the child is to develop a materialistic outlook.

Preschool education is an integral part of the new educational structure. Carrying the child through the period during which in America he would be in the first or second grade, it lasts until the child is eight years old. It is given in three types of institutions: crèches or nurseries, kindergartens, and hearths. The crèches, which are connected with factories where women are employed,

are nurseries which care for young babies while the mothers work. The care of children under three is a duty of the People's Health Commissariat. Generally speaking, the calibre of the crèche is quite high—certainly it offers the mother a splendid haven for her infant.

One of the best nurseries is connected with the tobacco factory at Rostov, and it has been in existence for more than a decade. It receives the child at the age of two months, when the mother returns to her work in the factory. And, as might be expected, the work is very practical. Correct social and personal habits are the desiderata. The children are given regular meals which are prepared by experts. Caring for the youngsters is a staff of doctors, nurses, and teachers, of whom the latter have received special training for nursery and pre-school work.

To meet the needs of all the children of women engaged in industry, the number of crèches is unfortunately not adequate. Particularly in the rural sections—where they operate mainly in the summer while the mothers work in the fields—is their dearth apparent. In 1926 some 4000 crèches were reported to have been established. Since 1928, however, the collectivization movement has

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accelerated the development of nurseries, kindergartens, and playgrounds in these districts; thus, in 1931 more than a million children were cared for during the summer. One of the barriers that stands in the way of a more rapid development of the nursery is no doubt the cost to the government: this, it has been estimated, is about thirty rubles a month per child. High though this may be, however, it has probably been more than offset by the beneficial effect of the nursery on child health. The general decrease in infant mortality is traceable, it is believed, at least in part to the work of the crèches.

The hearths and kindergartens, which are quite similar in their work, supplement the work of the nursery. They care for children between the ages of three and eight years, and lay great stress on cleanliness, health, and habit formation. They are open the entire day, receiving many children as early as six o'clock in the morning. Naturally, the schools are used as cradles of Communism. On the walls one sees no pictures of Little Boy Blue or the equally celebrated high-jumping cow who leaped over the moon. There are no beaming cherubs; no toiling and bearded dwarfs; and certainly, no princelings! Instead, there are pic-

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tures of the infant Lenin, peasants and workers, the Red Army, and similar personalities.

The main principles of preschool education have been set down as follows:¹

(1) Orientation with reference to labor and labor education; (2) close contact with contemporary life; (3) building the child's life, utilizing to the greatest possible extent his own participation; (4) development of the materialistic conceptions; (5) nearness to nature; (6) realism in the content of discussions with children and in their stories; (7) introduction of certain organizing centers into the daily activities of the children; (8) acceptance of certain ideas, from the number of principles of the old preschool education, such as the great value of games for children . . . and to a certain extent [of] didactic materials of Montessori. Activity, self-activity and realism (materialism) in education—these are the slogans of the new kindergartens.

In the preschool the children are initiated into the elementary forms of self-service, and gradually they are led into more social types of labor. They help to keep things tidy and clean; they assist at the tables, care for animals, work in the garden, shovel snow, and participate in dozens of other activities. But lest they overtax their strength,

¹ A. P. Pinkevitch, "Development of Public Instruction and Pedagogical Thought in Russia," *Educational Outlook*, May, 1931, p. 199.

they are carefully supervised. Notably, much stress is laid on nature. In their various studies the children make their own collections, and on their hikes and excursions they search for flowers, insects, stones, and all sorts of things which not only appeal to the childish eye and heart, but are instructive as well. Care is taken to point out to the children the relations between the things they see growing, as well as their actual use in everyday life. After observing nature, the children themselves proceed to grow things—often, where possible, vegetables that the kindergarten requires; usually they raise animals, also. Nor is hand training overlooked. Every kindergarten has some space reserved for a workshop, which the children, having visited outside shops and collected the necessary materials and tools, often build themselves. They are, incidentally, allowed to experiment with tools, and use them independently: they are guided only when they actually need help.

In Russia, it has been said, all the world is a school. The new education, therefore, is related to the actual, living world. The school children make frequent trips to places of interest and importance. Shoemakers are visited; blacksmiths, and farms and factories of all sorts, are inspected.

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If a carpenter or an electrician comes to the school to do a repair job, the children are encouraged to watch him at work, and so become initiated into some of the mysteries of crafts.

Of predominant influence in the school is the national stress upon collective activity. In conformance with this, the older groups hold meetings, elect a school soviet, select committees, and confer jointly with their parents and teachers. Every effort is made to prepare the youngsters for a life of coöperation. It is, indeed, chiefly with respect to this emphasis that the Russian schools differ from those of other lands.

Creative and esthetic expression are also highly stressed. The older groups record their impressions and their daily activities in drawings; and, as in many other new schools, these drawings are sometimes placed on the walls, where they become a sort of wall newspaper. Music, singing, dancing, and rhythmic exercises are other notable features of the curriculum.

The preschool emphasizes, as we have noted, the inculcation in the children of good personal and social habits. While they are very young, the children are familiarized with elements of hygiene that relate to sleep, feeding, toilet, and the like.

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In the nursery school the child learns to feed himself with a spoon; how to behave himself at the table; to wash himself before and after eating; to dress himself with little help. In the kindergarten the development of habits is carried on much in the same way, except that it is now somewhat more advanced and complex. However, the child develops many habits besides those of personal and social cleanliness: he must form habits of correct speech, of congenial social life, of work, of proper movement, of observation, and of coöperation.

When the child has turned seven, he begins his work with grammar and arithmetic—which are, incidentally, taught not as separate subjects but as part of other activities. In the teaching of reading, whole words are observed rather than syllables or single letters. Much attention, moreover, has been given to the development of a child literature that does not restrict itself to any particular educational level, but covers the child's whole life. The old Czarist books obviously would be irreconcilable with Communistic ideology: pedagogically they are out of date, stressing as they do encyclopedic knowledge. So again the real world is presented to the learner, and an endeavor is made to depict the miracles of the Five Year Plan

as excitingly as the old-time storyteller related the tribulations and triumphs of the golden princess.

An excellent collection of Communistic children's literature has been made in America by the Penniman Memorial Library of Education of the University of Pennsylvania. Classified under five heads, the contents of this literature comprise the following: (1) the child's environment; (2) the world of machines and inventions; how things are made; (3) stories from far and near, old and new; (4) riddles and stories to test and direct perception; (5) imaginative entertainment.² Those books that reflect the child's own world consider such matters as plant and animal life, health and hygiene, toys and their makers, pets and children's organizations. Their main purpose is to offer the child material which is instructive, but which at the same time is entertaining. And, true to the program of Hammer and Sickle, many of these books serve as vehicles of indoctrination. Thus, in arithmetic the youngster tussles with problems of the Five Year Plan, of prices charged in coöperative stores, and so on. Nor are numerous direct or subtle jibes at the clergy lacking.

² For a comprehensive and stimulating account of children's literature, Thomas Woody's excellent book, *New Minds: New Men?*, is recommended.

Realizing that education flourishes only in the soil of coöperation and understanding, the Russian government has been making a strenuous effort to familiarize parents with the problems involved in the rearing of children. For mothers an array of literature dealing with all phases of a child's life has been published. Written in simple, understandable language, these pamphlets present their material in from fifteen to thirty pages. Thousands of copies have been disseminated throughout the land. Some of the topics considered are the following: How to Protect Little Children from Diseases; What Toys Are Necessary for Children?; Playthings in the Preschool Age; The Significance of Environment for the Child; What Kind of Diversions Do Children Need?

In their schools the Russian children are happy. The idea, so commonly encountered in America, that in Russia nearly everyone is sad, is not shared by such men as Dewey, Woody, and Washburne. The children certainly have enough to make them cheerful. They are living in a world of their own; a world which they understand and relish; a world which is a constant and fertile lure to action.

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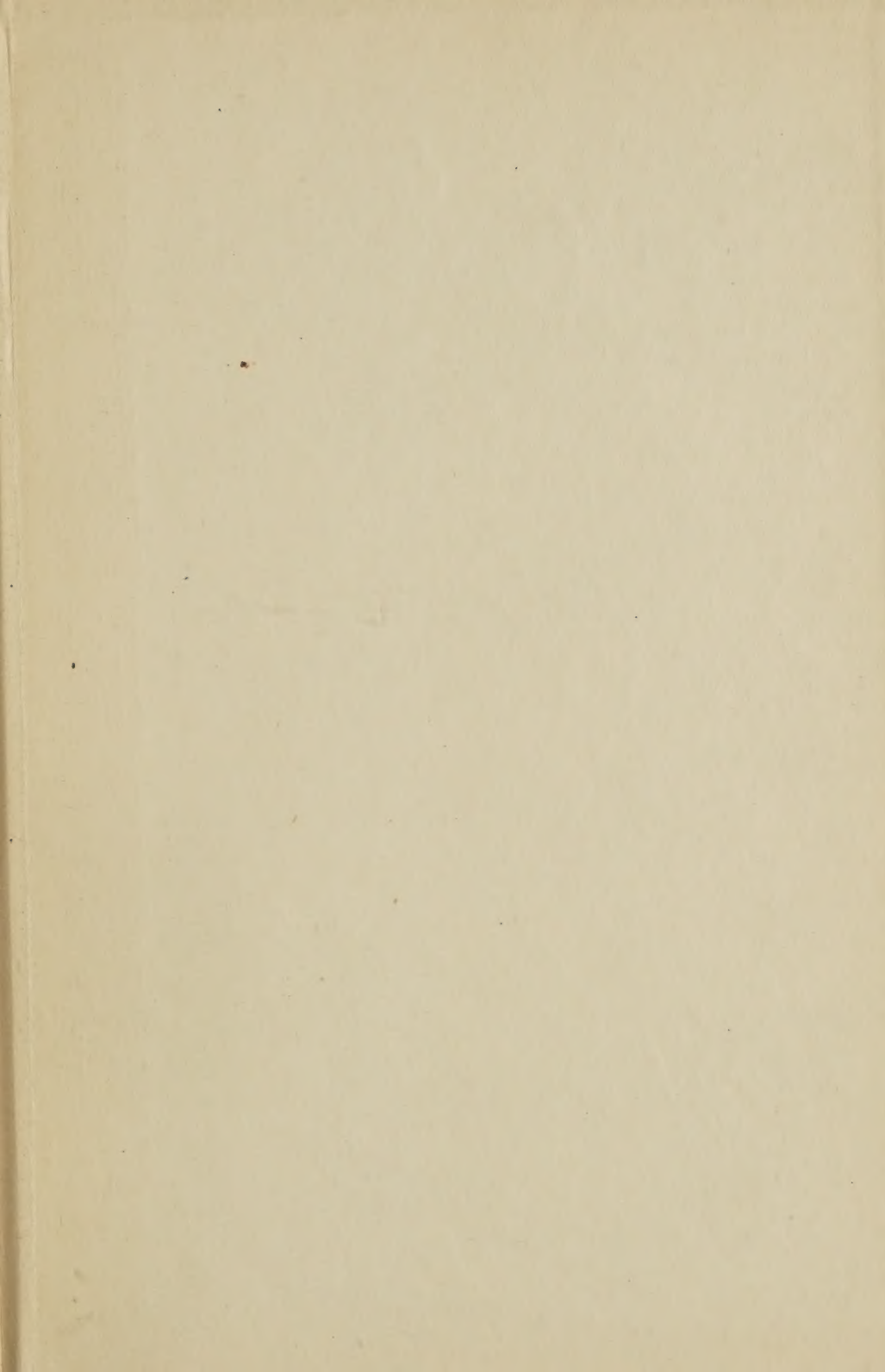
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